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LEGITIMACY IN THE PROCESS OF
DECISION MAKING IN EDUCATION:
A CASE STUDY IN HONG KONG SECONDARY EDUCATION

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Chapter I. Research Intention and Rationale

In 1982, an OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) panel which was invited for an overall review of the Hong Kong education system, delivered its report to the governor. It expressed the following concern about education policy-making in Hong Kong.

There is a pervasive feeling that responsibility and knowledge about what is happening lies elsewhere; but no-one is sure where this is, or who holds the master plan (Perspective, 1981:15-16)

This is a true reflection of the situation that research or study of educational decision making in Hong Kong was very rare. In-depth researches into educational issues were usually produced by a few dozens of scholars in the two universities and some of their graduate students.

Among the major recommendations of the OECD report was the issue of medium of instruction and the principle of positive discrimination. They later endorsed by the Education Commission, formed as a result of the OECD report in 1984. The Commission stated:

"that all other things being equal, teaching and learning would be more effective if the medium of instruction were the mother tongue, a view endorsed by the panel, and that the consequential loss of exposure to English might result in a fall in the standard of the latter language, we

recommend that individual secondary school authorities should be encouraged to adopt Chinese as medium of teaching." (ECR, 1984)

It further recommended that

"secondary schools which use Chinese as the instructing medium should be given additional resources to strengthen the teaching of English to avert any consequential drop in the standard of English due to reduced exposure." (ECR, 1984:43)

The provision of the additional resources was based on the "policy of positive discrimination" assistance scheme would provide a standard-size secondary school which teaches everything other than English in Chinese:

1. two additional teachers of English, possibly one graduate and one non-graduate, so that English lessons in secondary one to two can be conducted in smaller classes. This is regarded as more effective in teaching.
2. movable partitions for dividing classrooms to create additional rooms required as a result of split classes.
3. a second wire-free induction loop system to schools which are eligible for one or more additional English teachers.
4. an on-off library grant for the purchase of additional reading materials in English as well as other teaching aids.

As for other secondary schools, additional resources would be provided in proportion to the amount of teaching conducted in Chinese.

In addition to the provision of additional resources, the

Education Commission recommended that the government should

1. make available a set comprehensive and clear guidelines to assist individual secondary school authorities to decide on the language mode of instruction. The guidelines may, amongst most other things, include possible language medium models and how schools can shift from Chinese to English by level, by subject or by a combination of these methods having regard to their individual circumstances.
2. provide secondary schools with information on the English proficiency of their secondary 1 entrants to assist them in streaming their pupils.
3. modify teacher preparation for new and serving teachers to prepare for a wider use of Chinese in the classroom;
4. compile handbooks with technical terms in both languages for the various subject taught in secondary schools;
5. redesign the Chinese English syllabuses and arrange for publication of textbooks in both languages.
6. put an end to the distinction between Anglo-Chinese and Chinese middle schools by encouraging the removal of such references from the names of the schools.

In May, 1986, the Education Department issued the long-awaited language policy paper to all government and aided schools. The paper condensed the language issue to an assistance scheme. It stipulated that schools which adopt Chinese as a medium of instruction would be provided with additional staff and material resources as recommended by the Education Commission Report, (hereinafter ECR, 1984).

While the Education Department encouraged schools to enter

the scheme, it emphasized that the choice was entirely left with the school authorities. All schools, whether they would change their language policy or not, were required to reply by the end of June, 1986. The deadline was subsequently postponed to the end of October of the same year. Decision-making at the school level which would have a lasting effect on Hong Kong education was envisaged. In fact, as clearly stipulated in the circular, the Education Department requested that the information should be circulated to all members of the teaching staff. It was obvious that since the choice was up to the schools and the decision had a long lasting effect on individual schools, various individuals or groups would be involved in the decision making process.

In this paper, these individuals or groups bound by similar interests are regarded as decision makers of different levels. The decision made is therefore an outcome of the interaction of the "decision makers". Involvement in the decision-making process in most schools rated high (Lai, 1987). Public opinion was in favour of change. However, when the scheme came into implementation in 1988, less than one quarter of the schools chose to adopt Chinese. Thus, those who were concerned with education asked, "How are decisions made?"

The present paper is an attempt to understand the educational decision-making through a case study, namely, the language issue defined as the choice of the mode of medium of instruction of a Hong Kong secondary school.

Studies in educational decision-making had for some years derived its theoretical framework from social sciences, especially from political science and management science

(Griffiths, 1959). These models of decision-making drew very heavily on the works of Barnard and Simon who regarded rationality as the underlying principle of decision-making. Rationality, in its simplest form, could be defined as the intention to maximize the means-end relationship (Simon, 1964). Decision making in this sense is a somewhat mechanical and predictable activity. Continuous effort in the studies of educational decision making revealed that decision making process in institutions such as universities, owing to its ambiguities in goal and organization, underwent a different process as revealed by past studies. Decision-making in these institutions could be viewed as a process having many effects unrelated to outcomes; rather, it is a series of technicalities focused only on goal achievement (March, 1982).

Though time, new models have evolved which marked a departure from the notion of rationality. A notable example is the "Garbage-Can" model (Cohen et al., 1972; Cohen & March, 1974; March & Olsen, 1976). This model emphasizes that decisions are products of the confluence of relatively independent factors at a given time. The traditional assumption of maximization of means-end relationship is not adequate to explain the given situation. As a result, the notion of legitimacy evolves as an alternative principle. Cheng (1987) in his seminal work of study of two episodes in educational policy-making in Hong Kong, made use of the concept of legitimacy as an alternative to rationality and developed two parallel explanations to the episodes. Cheng attempted to prove that, in addition to the well-versed rationality explanation in decision making process, legitimacy

could be employed as a perspective of explanation. The present study follows the example of Cheng (1987) and attempts to understand decision-making process in local secondary schools level by developing a legitimacy explanation of certain issues as an alternative to rationality explanation.* In the course of reporting, the two different perspectives of interpretations will be presented.

The present study, however, does not focus on discovering the reason why schools are apathetic to the recommendations but rather concentrate on utilizing the issue as opportunity to examine the decision-making process in secondary schools in Hong Kong. The study is to discover and identify "facts" on the decision-making process and try to explain the "facts" by alternative perspectives, namely, the notion of rationality and the notion of legitimacy with the purpose of establishing the validity of a legitimacy explanation. These explanations may offer very different answers to the question "why?". The present study also intends to discover the role of various "actors" in the decision-making process and their interactions. This may add to the understanding of the decision making process at school level.

Aim and Nature of the Study

The aim of the present study is to understand the decision-making process. It pertains to a basic analysis of the dynamics of decision-making process and hopefully to the enrichment of our knowledge in this respect. It belongs to the camp of "researchers" in Husen's "two cultures" (1984:8). The study

therefore bears all the characteristics of an academic research: it is to be judged on the basis of academic scrutiny. In Husen's and Kogan's observation, there was a mistrust between educational researchers and policy-makers. Educational research concentrated on the logistic and comprehensiveness of their theoretical system, whereas policy-makers asked questions about the practicability of such researches. In many cases, effort made by both parties did not nourish one another.

However, the basic nature of the research does not preclude its relevance to educational practice. There is in Hong Kong an excessive belief in formal structure, in the system and procedures of policy-making which in reality contribute only modestly to the shaping of public policies. As Cheng (1987) argued, decision making could be a matter of defence of the actors' legitimacy rather than the maximization of goals. If the study can succeed in revealing and explaining the real dynamics in decision making in an educational institution, it might help people to readjust their conceptions and attitudes towards educational decision-making.

Chapter II Review of Literature and Theoretical Framework

The aim of this study is to search for theory or to discover theory to explain the acquired data, and to generate hypotheses there from.

The purpose of this section on theory is therefore not to delineate the theoretical framework in which the research operated, but to represent the theories encountered during the study. In fact, data and theory interacted dynamically in the course of the study. The writer constantly reminded himself to remain objective in the course of searching theories to interpret the data. He had to be open to all possible arenas of explanation. However, as a focus of study, the writer is especially interested in the possibility of applying the notion of legitimacy as a new perspective of interpretation, as an alternative to the well-developed theories connected with the notion of rationality. The notion of legitimacy has recently evolved as a significant concept in educational decision-making. This is basically the product of the study of education institutions in the 1970s. Cohen et al., (1972) developed a decision making model termed organized anarchy to address choice processes under conditions of ambiguity in organizations. These conditions will be discussed at a later stage.

The writer starts with a basic question: How are decisions made?

There is never a shortage of theories or models in the study of decision-making. This section surveys some of these theories and models, especially those that are pertinent to aims of this research. An attempt is made to classify them, and to see how

they can be useful in explaining the decision-making process of the language issue and to identify possible alternatives.

The first part of this section will discuss the two key concepts underlying the studies of decision making. They are (1) the notion of rationality and (2) the notion of legitimacy. This is followed by a section on the review of literature on educational decision-making and discussion on how the two concepts were transcribed into different models that help to open up new avenues to the understanding of decision-making process in the educational field. The section will seek to establish that, the notion of legitimacy, though less thoroughly developed in term of its theoretical construct as compared to the notion of rationality, is academically valid and warrants further research into its applicability. It follows that in the process of field work, in this case the interview sessions, the writer, though remains open in the course of interviews, looks for data that help to explain the different dimensions of legitimacy. The last section discusses the basic considerations of the school authorities in the language issue.

The Notion of Rationality

In his seminal work to explain the Cuban Missile Crisis, Allison (1971) puts forward three parallel perspectives to explain the episode: the rational models, the organizational models and the political models. Each model produces different "explanation" to the acquired data. These have since also been borrowed by writers in the field of educational decision-making

(e.g. Peterson and William's, 1972; Crowson, 1975; Benjamin and Kerchner, 1982; Lane, 1983; Kirst, 1977). The study stimulated the present writer to consider decision making in a multiple perspective. Allison's 3 models can be regarded as good summary to the decision-making models based on Rationality as their theoretical constructs. The following review will make use of Herbert Simon's classic definition of rationality as a basic principle to classify Allison's models and other related theories.

Herbert Simon discusses decision-making in the context of both management science and political science. Central to his discussions are his insights on rationality. Simon follows the classical definition of rationality:

In a broad sense, rationality denotes a style of behavior (A) that is appropriate to the achievement of the given goals, (B) and within the limits imposed by sure conditions and constraints (1964).

He distinguishes substantive rationality and procedural rationality as the two forms of rationality (1985:294). In essence, the concern of substantive rationality is the "substance" or output of decision-making; that of procedural rationality the "procedure" or the process of decision-making. In Simon's own analysis, the focus is on the behavior of the decision-makers:

Behavior is substantively rational when is appropriate to the achievement of given goals within the limits imposed by given conditions and

constraints. Behavior is procedurally rational when it is the outcome of appropriate deliberation. Its procedural rationality depend on the process that generated it (1976: 130-131).

Substantive rationality is also referred to as objective rationality because here the decision is based purely on constraints that arise from the external situation (Simon, 1985:294). On the other hand, procedural rationality can also be referred to as "subjective" rationality because it takes into account "the limitation of knowledge and the computing power" (or bounded rationality) of the decision-maker (Ibid).

The relevance of Simon's notion of rationality to this study is its distinctive separation of "substance" from "procedures" of decision-making and its emphasize on the importance of the "procedure". This pertains to the relationship between means and end in decision-making.

Substantive Rationality

Simon's substantive rational model is usually realized as the rational model in classical sense, or comprehensive rational model as it is sometimes called. This is typically represented by following 5 steps (adapted from Carley, 1980:11).

1. identification of problems and criteria for solution,
2. survey of alternative solutions,
3. estimation of consequences,
4. comparison of consequences,
5. selection of an optimal solution.

The basic assumptions in this classical rational model, as

reflected by Simon, include

1. It assumes that there are definite distinctive goals in decision-making.
2. It assumes that decision-maker is a rational man or an entity that acts as a single rational man.
3. It implicitly assumes that decision maker has the intelligence to acquire full information and full capacity to analyze it, or at least is able to assess the probabilities.
4. It follows that given a particular situation, there is a unique optimal solution to each problem such a policy-making process can be conveniently referred to as one of "maximization" or "optimization".
5. Most relevant to this study, such a process assumes that decisions are made on a process where the "end" determines the "means". In group decision-making, there is an identifiable consensual goal which determines the consensual procedures.

Later researchers discovered that rational model in classical sense is inadequate to explain decision-making in reality. New models evolve subsequently.

Procedural rationality

Simon's notion of procedural rationality can be realized in a number of theoretical frameworks of decision-making, viz. as an amended classical rationality model, as an organizational model and as a type of political model. The following paragraphs intend to discuss briefly on each of them.

Incrementalism can be regarded as an amended version of classical rationality.

Lindblom argues that in order to be rational in the classical sense, one has to be comprehensive. That is, one has to have full access to comprehensive information and full competence to analyze the alternatives. Lindblom argues that this is not impossible in reality. He further argues that actors that in decision-making "fall back on agreement whenever it can be found" (Lindblom, 1959). This deviates significantly from the classical rational model because the actors arrive at consensus even if they disagree on the goals. Lindblom names this model as successive limited comparison or limited rationality, where only a limited number of solutions which are not far apart from the status quo can be safely selected. As a matter of consequence, means are often selected without reference to a well-defined end. An attempt to adopt the incrementalism notion to explain educational decision-making can be found in Hochschild's comprehensive analysis of school segregation in the United States (1984). Lindblom's incrementalism comes very close to Simon's "Satisficing model". In Simon's view, the decision-maker's rationality is bounded not only by the lack of full information and capability, but also by his/her particular values. In the case of decision made by an organization, the actors in the decision who disagree in values tend to accept the solution which receives early consensus. The decision-making process is therefore a "satisficing" process (Simon, 1957b) in which the actors in the decision discover and select satisfactory alternatives rather than an "optional" solution.

By adopting the above rationales, organizational models emphasize the organizational influence on decision-making either in shaping the goals or determining the constraints in attaining them. For example, Cyert and March (1963) studied behavior in business firms and found that organizational structures and conventional practices heavily influence the development of goals, the formulation of expectations and the processes of choice in business firms (Jenkins, 1978:34). Allison further postulated that in bureaucratic organizations such as a government, decisions were made where (a) most of the behavior is determined by previously established procedures; (b) decision procedures have become routines that decision-makers in the government are given only limited choices and (c) decisions have to be made within narrow constraints (Allison, 1971:79).

In general, a decision-making process can be regarded as "political" if there are conflicting goals among the decision-makers. The goal-conflicting actors may come to a decision by consensus on the procedure of how an acceptable decision can be made. The consensus is therefore one in the process and not in the goals, as different from the preceding models. In many cases, goal conflicting actors do not even come to a consensus concerning the procedure of decision-making, e.g. there is no definite answer to who should be involved in the decision-making. In this case, decisions are made by interactions among the actors. This model is not included in Simon's notion of rationality but found in the work of Allison and others and is regarded as Partisan Rationality. Such interactions involve either peaceful negotiations, persuasions, or rather antagonistic

domination or even coercion. Decisions are produced as a result of such interactions and not as a result of any consensual procedures. Notable examples include Allison's "government politics paradigm" that decisions are resultants of political interactions (1971), Archer's assertion that decision-making process can be viewed as a process of political bargaining or exchange of benefits (1979), Lindblom's "persuasion" by which one interest party exerts control over others in a polyarchy ("persuasion" includes propaganda, indoctrination, advertising, campaigning, "scientific" analysis) (Lindblom, 1977:52-54; 1980:30), Lowi's "manipulation of process" (Lowi 1970), Bachrach & Baratz's "Control of Agenda" (1963), Lukes' "Latent influence" that the dominant power may exercise influence to shape people's preferences (Ham & Hill, 1984:68).

Three alternatives to explain the decision-making process has been discussed so far: (1) the classical rational model or Simon's substantive rationality where there is consensus in the goal as well as the procedures; (2) the organizational model, the bureaucratic model and the model of political consensus, all as variations of Simon's "procedural rationality" where there are conflicts in goals but consensus in the procedures; and (3) the partisan political model not included in Simon's notion of rationality where there are conflicts in goals as well as in the procedures. A summary table is found below.

Classification of Rational Models

	Goals	Procedures
Substantive Rationality	consensus	consensus
Procedural Rationality	conflict	consensus
Partisan Rationality	conflict	conflict

The coherence in terms in the above discussion is important. In a way, the actors in the partisan political model are rational (in common sense). They are rational in the sense they are conscious of their goals, each has his own axe to grind, but they do not come to consensus in the procedures of making decisions. They are therefore not "rational" in Simon's sense. To Simon, consensus in procedures is a key element in rational decision-making. This will ensure the adoption of "means-end" paradigm as a basic principle to decision-making.

Despite their different focuses in the course of decision making, the above classifications of rational models have one element in common. They all assume that the main concern of actors in decision making is the decision output which produces the most desirable consequences. This is commonly noted as the "goal-maximization" paradigm. However, writers such as Habermas (1973) took a very different perspective in understanding the process of decision making. They argued that actors in decision making, on some circumstances, concerned more about their power, positions and roles in decision making. Their main concern was not the output but rather their own identities as actor of decision making. This introduces to the notion of legitimacy, as a complimentary and alternative concept (as contrast to

Simon's rationality) to rationality in decision-making.

Legitimacy in Decision-making

Legitimacy is a concept fairly widely used by writers on decision making who are not satisfied that Simon's notion of rationality is adequate to explain the decision making process. The notion, though broadly found in the literature of decision making studies, has not been well defined. The concept has not been sufficiently studied to be transformed into any independent model in decision-making. The concept is nevertheless relevant to this study for it is believed that such a concept may open up a new perspective to explain the language issue in a school setting. The following is a brief survey of the epistemological development of the concept.

The classical definition of Legitimacy is provided by the Webster International Dictionary:

- (a) the possession of title or status as a result of acquisition by means that are or are not held to be according to law and custom. (b) a conformity to recognized principles or accepted rules or standards.

In the tradition of Weber, legitimacy has been defined as "the degree to which institutions are valued for themselves and considered right and proper". (Bierstedt, 1964:386, paraphrasing Lipset). Other writers define political legitimacy "as the quality of 'oughtness' that is perceived by the public to inhere in a political regime. That government is legitimate is viewed as morally proper for a society". (Merelman, 1966:548). Legitimacy

is matter of "credibility and acceptability on the part of the modern state in its relationship to its society and its citizens" (Weiler, 1985:185). Habermas (1973) and Offe (Habermas, tr.1975) also use the term legitimacy in the context of the state and that societies in late-capitalist stage are required to legitimate themselves to be accepted by their members.

Whereas the concept of legitimacy has not been transformed into an independent model on decision-making, the acquisition of legitimacy (or legitimation) has been considered by some writers as significant in the decision-making process.

Recent studies on the concept of legitimacy indicated that the term can be understood from different dimensions. There can be four alternative uses of the term legitimacy in relation to decision making.

First, the substance of the decisions per se may aim at acquiring legitimacy for the state. For example, there could be a policy to indoctrinate citizens to be loyal to the state.

Secondly, a decision which is believed to be "good" can help to gain legitimacy for the state. For example, improvement of social welfare help the state to gain popular support. In this sense, a "good" policy legitimize the state.

Thirdly, a "good" decision making process, regardless of the substance of policy itself, may help to legitimize the state. If decisions of the state are made with broad citizen participation, the citizens tend to think that the government is a good government and tend to neglect the substance of the policy per se. In this sense, a "good" decision making process legitimize the decision-maker.

Fourthly, a "good" decision-making process may help to legitimate the decision made. People may accept the decision so far it is decided by proper procedure, even if they do not like the decision made. In this sense, a "good" decision making process legitimate the decision itself.

It is clear that the concept of legitimacy is used to explain the phenomena of decision making process in which decision are not made according to goal maximization but to provide "appropriateness for the decision-makers or the decision itself". These will be elaborated, using cases in educational policies as examples. The last three dimensions will be most relevant to the present study in which the process of decision making in local secondary schools is under study.

Education "for" Legitimacy

This corresponds to the first dimension of legitimacy described above. Much has been said about using education as a means for the state to acquire legitimacy. Habermas takes educational planning as an example and asserts that curriculum planning is in most circumstances under subtle governmental control (Habermas, tr. 1975:71). This is an attempt to compensate for legitimation deficits through conscious manipulation.

Offe regards education as a means used by state to increase efficiency of the society and as to affect the moral consciousness of people which may otherwise undermine the legitimacy of the existing political order (Offe, 1984:137).

Some theories of political education regard education, inter alia, as an instrument for political socialization. Education

reinforces the legitimacy for the state to maintain the status quo (Portor, ed. 1983; Weiler e.g. 1985).

Education "as" Legitimacy

This corresponds to the second dimension of the concept of legitimacy i.e. a "good" policy legitimizes the state (or the decision maker). In many developing countries, the expansion of education serves as a major means of legitimacy acquisition. When alleviation of poverty is a difficult task and political promises are equally precarious, expansion of education becomes the cheapest and most comfortable way of making people feel satisfied. This led to Carnoy's remark that in many less developed countries, almost every coup d'etat is followed by an expansion or a reform of education (Carnoy, speech 1985). A similar notion of legitimacy lies in the reproduction function of education (Carnoy and Levin, 1985). Education as a social policy reproduces and hence legitimates the stratification in society. The well discussed screening hypothesis serves as an example of this legitimacy function. If education provides less an increase of productivity than a "credential" (Collins, 1979) to justify the position in the social strata, then education becomes an instrument to maintain the status quo. In other words, education legitimize the existing social structure. Bowles' and Gintis' Schooling in Capitalist America (1976), which has now become a classic in the field, falls also in this category.

Process to Legitimize the State

This corresponds to third dimension of legitimacy.

Hans Weiler applies the Marxist notion of legitimacy to explain the educational policy-making process. In his comparison of education policies in U.S. and Federation of the Republics of Germany, Weiler identifies three strategies used by the state as a means of compensatory legitimization i.e. to compensate for legitimacy deficit. These are legalization, expertise, and participation. In particular, expertise refers to the utilization of scientific expertise in the policy-making process, especially through such devices as experimentation and planning (Weiler, 1983:261). Participation refers to "the development and stipulation of client participation in the policy process." (Ibid).

The use of expertise and participation are particularly fashionable in controversial "issues" which are embedded in a context of values, choices and conflicts" (1984b:470). On these occasions, planning in technical terms "presents a temptation to remain within a carefully constructed shell that is made up of data, targets and projections" and participatory planning "has become popular to solve the problem of meeting different societal needs (Ibid:471). In the end

The notion of 'legitimization by procedure' thus open up the possibility of authorizing the continued exercise of political authority without examining its normative "worthiness" - so long as it proves to adhere to procedures that can claim to be 'rational', intelligent and transparent (Ibid:476).

Weiler has discerned the forms in which the state acquires its legitimacy. The theme in Weiler's notion is that the

"procedures" legitimize the status quo, "for avoiding substantive changes in the objective of those who exercise power over a society." This is, the process legitimize the state.

Process to Legitimate Policy

This corresponds to the fourth dimension of the concept legitimacy and can be understood in three levels: (a) legitimation as a legal or an institutional procedure, (b) legitimation as government manipulation and (c) legitimacy as a matter of political culture.

Legitimation as an Institutional Procedure

Dye (1984:318) uses the term "policy legitimation" to indicate a special stage in policy making. He refers to the stage when policies finally get endorsed in the formal policy-making machinery. This is still along the "old definition of legitimacy in the realm of legality and relates little to the values and beliefs discussed above.

In a comparative study of the educational policy-making processes in U.K. and U.S., Kogan and AtKin use the term "legitimation" as one step in the process by which "educational policies become identified, expressed, legitimated, promulgated, and tested" (kogan and AtKin, 1982:2).

Jennings (1977:39-40) in an education context, identifies "legitimation" as the fifth of six stages in policy-making. In this "legitimation" stages,

Decisions may be taken by a few influential
people or by group of policy-makers that has

power to direct others formally or informally.

The choice of policy is then ratified or legislated by a majority of those policy makers empowered to do so by law.

Jennings' notion of "legitimation" is still largely a matter of legality. Policy-makers are influential because they are "empowered by law".

Legitimation as Government Manipulation

In another study, Kogan recognizes that many policy committees and advisory bodies, which are supposed to be public, are "far more 'in-house', far more a part of official review, than the outward forms seem to suggest (Kogan and Packwood, 1974:23). In this sense, policy committees and advisory bodies are means for the government to legitimate its policies.

Similar notions are adopted by Gaziel who studies advisory councils in the centralized system of France and finds that one of the functions of advisory councils is to provide the government bureaucracy with legitimacy for its policies and to shield it from criticism (1980:399-40).

Salter and Tapper use the term "legitimation" as the central theme in their thesis (1981). Their notion of legitimation covers both the process and the product of policy-making. They have notified the change of the Department of Education and Science (DES) in U.K. from using external committees to using experts in policy making, and attribute this change of process to a change of legitimacy. They argue that

If educational change is to be acceptable to the

populace at large it has to go through an ideological stage. These are, analytically speaking, two aspects to this stage: (a) the way to which the policy is produced and (b) the policies produced. Both require ideological legitimation and, in practice, the nature of this legitimation may overlap the two aspects (1981:111-112).

Legitimacy as a Matter of Political Culture

Salter and Tapper, nevertheless, do hint that legitimacy hinges on public opinion. "The externally-based inquiry", Salter and Tapper state, has "rendered these policies credible and acceptable to the general public." (Ibid:198). There is also the observation that "the DES would acquire increased public confidence from greater openness" (Ibid:199). Here, credibility, acceptability and public confidence are all ingredients of legitimacy.

In his recent work, Kogan has extended this notion of legitimacy to values. He contrasts the liberal democratic model with the participative model in education accountability. He asserts that there remains strongly rooted in practice a tradition of liberal theory which emphasizes process and equity, and hence has a firm belief in knowledge, expertise and efficiency. On the other hand, there is the participative model which stems from a set of values which start from a very different principle that

no legitimation is permanent but must be constantly reinforced by participation and

consultation with those receiving services or providing them (1986:92).

The above discussion points to the very root of the difference in sources of legitimacy underlying expertise and consultation.

The above discussion of the different dimensions of the concept of legitimacy provides the major components of the theoretical framework.

1. Legitimacy as a theoretical tool tends to explain the process of decision making from the perspective of a concern for the credibility and acceptability of the decision makers and/or the decision made. It serves as an alternative concept to rationality which concerns with "maximization of goal".
2. Policy-makers (or decision makers) tend to make their choices in order to legitimate their policy and/or to legitimize their roles as policy-makers.
3. Legitimation or legitimization can be acquired through a "good" policy or "good" procedure through which the policy is made.

The present study does not intend to test the above assumptions as hypotheses-testing in empirical studies. However, these assumptions put together can provide a new perspective and focus for the writer and to guide him in his observation and interviews. The review of literature on the process of legitimation suggests that the writer has to take note of different devices of legitimation in a school context. These may include the identify of the institutional procedure of the

school, or the operation of the formal structure; the identification of the various actors in decision making; and identification of the organization climate of the school. These considerations will be discussed later in the section on various model educational policy making and be transcribed into possible steps in a research.

Acquisition of Legitimacy

Different approaches to acquire legitimacy have been studied by various researchers. Some notable examples of these studies are:

1. Expertise and Legitimacy

Expertise is a way to gain legitimacy for the policy because

- (a) experts have the accessibility to information and knowledge not available to public, thus evades uncertainty (Kogan, 1986:92);
- (b) experts are impartial since knowledge and information are "objective", and "objectivity" is always equated with "impartiality"; and
- (c) experts provides rules for decisions (Lindblom, 1980:30-31).

However, it should be noted that experts are not all that "neutral" and objective. There is increasing awareness that interpretation of "facts" and information involve "value" and thus experts are not totally impartial. The consequence is that experts are sometimes actors in the policy making process and have to maintain their legitimacy

of impartiality as well.

2. Participation as Legitimacy

While expertise pertains to facts and impartiality, participation is related to values and interests (McGrew and Wilson, 1982:3).

Participation are often interpreted in terms of different levels:

- (a) nominal, consultative and responsible participation (Evans, 1977:29).
- (b) information, consultation, negotiation, shared decision, joint planning and neighborhood control (Spiegel, cited in Fagence, 1977:128).
- (c) A most useful model is Arnstein's "Ladder of Participation".

	Citizen Control	
7	Delegated power	degree of citizen control
6	Partnership	
5	Placation	
4	Consultation	degree of tokenism
3	Informing	
2	Therapy	non-participation
1	Manipulation	

The relevance of this model is that it places tokenism in a continuum of participation and non-participation in decision-making. Consultation in various form are adopted in the educational policy making procedure. This

is viewed by many researchers as devices to obtain legitimacy. These devices include advisory committees, solicitation of public opinion and third party consultation.

3. Advisory Committee for Exchange of Legitimacy

Advisory committee obtains legitimacy for the policy made when it is composed of representatives from particular interest groups and members of various professional expertise or ideology.

4. Advisory Committee for Legitimation

Advisory committee has the privileges for being "impartial", thus legitimate the policy and in some occasion also legitimize the policy maker, or the government, see Gaziel's study on the French case (1980) in which he indicate that advisory committees plays the dual role of constituting an objective appraisal of government performance and confirming the policies of the government, shielding it from criticism. Hong Kong Government knows very well the functions of 300 advisory committees for their achievement of providing her legitimacy to rule despite of her "undemocratic" foundation.

5. Third Party Consultation

Third party consultation or third party intervention involves consultant who have no vested interest in the issue. OECD study on overall Hong Kong education situation in 1982 is a typical example.

6. Public Opinion

Actors may carry more weight in decision making if they claim they have access to public opinion.

A government may well claim legitimacy for a "white paper" if the preceding "green paper" has undergone a process of public consultation.

The legitimacy obtained by public opinion is different from that due to expertise. The legitimacy of expertise comes from the belief that policies are good if they are produced by experts who possess the knowledge, who can handle uncertainty and who are independent of biased interests. The legitimacy of public opinion comes from the belief that policies are good if all interests are represented.

These ideas are especially valuable to this study as it may shed lights on how legitimacy of certain proposals concerning language issue can be attained in a school context.

The above description implies that, in the present study, a multiple-perspective approach to understand the decision making process in a local context may be considered. Cheng (1987) in his study of the Committee to Review Post-Secondary and Technical Education (CRE) Report, suggested that UPGC (Universities and Polytechnics Grant Committee) rejected The CRE Report (sometimes referred as The Toply Report 1982) on the rationale to retain its legitimate role of decision-maker in all matters concerning higher education. Hence educational policy making could not be understood solely from the perspective of "maximization of rationality". In the present study, the writer tries to explore new perspectives of looking into the decision making process in the local school context, with a focus on the applicability of the notion of legitimacy with its four dimensions. The language issue was chosen as a case study because the issue fully revealed

the interactions among various actors, including their perception of themselves and others.

Literature on Educational Decision Making

Suzanne E. Estler (1988) in an excellent review of educational decision-making stated that from the turn of the century to the present, the literature on decision-making in education has been successively and cumulatively built on assumptions of choice based on the following:

1. Rational calculation to achieve specified goals within a highly integrated bureaucratic structure (rational-bureaucratic).
2. Consensus among relevant participants to achieve shared goals (participatory).
3. Bargaining among interest groups and coalitions to maximize their separate goals (political); and
4. The confluence of streams of choice, opportunities, participants, problems, and solutions at a given point in time and under conditions of ambiguity in goals, technology, and participation (organized anarchy).

The first of the models reflecting these assumptions, the rational-bureaucratic, provided the normative base for the development of modern school system during the industrial revolution. The second, the participatory, reflected both democratic and professional norms dating to the work of Mary Parker Follett and the general reaction to the impersonality of scientific management beginning in 1920's (Gross, 1964). The third, a political perspective, began to appear in the 1960s when

federal court decisions, legislations, and regulation, and demands for community participation in school policy made the realities of multiple demands on school goals impossible to be ignored. Finally, the contextual, or organized-anarchy perspective, appeared in the 1970s, when the hopes and promises for education in solving innumerable social problems in the 1960s proved unrealistic despite the committed efforts of policy makers and educators across the country. Estler (1988) emphasized that the organized-anarchy perspective made the leap beyond assumptions of goal-driven behavior to address observations of decision-making reality left unexplained by traditional models. In so doing, it addressed the limits to the power of an individual decision maker in dealing with a complex world only partially understood and only partially within his or her control.

Although these perspectives emerged successively, each is very much alive in current literature. Viewed in historical context, these various models have served to inform subsequent ones. Thus, over time, rather than a denial of prior thinking, successive models have reintegrated elements of earlier traditions in new ways, yielding fuller explanations for the reality of education decision making.

Theoretical Themes in Educational Decision Making

Rational-Bureaucratic

The rational view assumes that decisions are the outcome of choice among alternatives with regard to objectives spelled out more fully, the steps include the specification of goals and objectives with a ranking based on organizational values

(preferences), identification of alternatives, evaluation of the consequences of alternatives and choice based on goal optimization. This view assumes structural aspects when placed in the context of a bureaucracy marked by task specialization, a formal control system, high integration with component parts contributing to separate ways to the achievement of organizational goals with decision-making responsibility at the apex of the hierarchy, and a closed system buffered from the environment (Firestone & Herriott, 1981; Simon, 1976; Weber, 1947). Implicit in the structural assumptions are the use of clear rules for organizational roles and behavior, separation of personal passions and interests from the formal work role, and activity in support of centralized decision-making at the apex of hierarchy (e.g. information, communication and co-ordination).

This model treats an organization as a single rational actor in the course of decision making. Through assumptions related to common-preferences, goals, and knowledge, groups of individuals who may be involved in decision making are still viewed as acting as one (Allison, 1971).

Although a number of authors equate administration in education with rational-bureaucratic decision-making (Campbell, Corbally, & Nystrand, 1974; Griffith, 1959), recent empirical research focuses on the problems implicit in the idealized model. These areas included the following:

1. Goals Central goals are multiple and too general for guiding school-level decisions making them subject to competing interpretations and choices of various alternatives (Firestone & Herriott, 1981; Sieber, 1975).

Assumptions of goal-driven behavior do not explain elements of decision-making that is not goal driven. (Corwin, 1970; March & Olsen, 1976).

2. Participation The rational-bureaucratic model deals with participation based on formal structure of the organizations. It does not deal effectively, however, with the effects of human attributes on the behavior of participants (Corwin, 1970), nor with the competing demands on the attention of participants that affect the nature of their involvement in a given decision (March & Olsen, 1976). Studies dealing with conflict between bureaucratic and professional orientations have been particularly important in identifying some of the problems related to participation (Corwin, 1970).
3. Information Some studies in the information processing of organizations, discuss limitations of human rationality in decision-making, focusing specifically on the limitations of human information processing (March & Simon, 1958; Simon, 1976).
4. Structure and Technology Research findings indicate that educational organizations do not appear to fit totally into the assumptions of a tightly integrated hierarchy. Although schools are formally characterized by a hierarchy of authority, decisions related particularly to the technical core of schooling, that is, teaching and learning, occur within the classroom with relatively loose coupling with the formal structure (Meyer & Rowan, 1978).

The rational bureaucratic approach is a fundamental model from

which many scholars expand and develop into various new models. However, with all its assumptions, it does not deal effectively with multiple and ambiguous goals, multiple interests and participants, scarce or inaccessible information, and characteristics of human nature, all often observed in reality.

Participative Model

Participatory decision making assumes decisions are the outcome of consensus among relevant participants. Typically applied to professional settings, organizational preconditions for consensual decision making include shared goals or values, influence based on professional expertise, and reason among participants. The model places high emphasis on communication and status equalization among participants. The organization is viewed as a closed system (Scott, 1981). Thus, decisions are still assumed to be goal optimizing, but the emphasis is on human processes rather than on structure to reach them (Baldrige, 1971; Bolman & Deal, 1984).

Perhaps more than any other tradition within the decision making literature, the participatory model is rooted more in values and beliefs than in empiricism. Greenbery (1975) categorizes the literature related to participatory decision making into four major schools of thought reflecting different value orientations: (a) the management school, valuing participation as a means for increasing productivity; (b) the humanistic psychology school, valuing participation based on ethics and human growth potential; (c) the democratic school, valuing participation as an end in itself; and (d) the radical

left, valuing participation as a means of education participants toward a revolutionary consciousness. In each case, the benefits of participation are viewed as given rather than as an empirical question.

As a model to explain decision-making processes in organizations, the participatory model has yet to prove itself except under limited conditions. The value of the model is, however, its applicability to professional organizations and professional work units within large organizations.

Political Model

The political model, by assuming decision as the outcome of bargaining among competing interests, the political model remains rational in assuming intentionally on the part of participants. It differs from the rational-bureaucratic model in viewing organization coalitions with multiple goals and inconsistent preferences associated with various interests as opposed to unitary or commonly-shared goals. Scarce resources and multiple interests set up a framework where bargaining is the basic process producing decisions. Access to formal or informal power determines the degree of influence an individual or group brings to the bargaining process. Examples of formal power are position authority and control over the budget, whereas ability to mobilize a constituency and political group within the community are examples of informal power.

The political view of decision making in education is a product of the 1950's and 1960's. The environment of the schools, traditionally buffered from the outside, became increasing

complex and volatile as a result of such divergent circumstances as the effects of court cases, civil right movement and teacher unionization (Atkin & House, 1981). Mann (1975) and Wirst and Kirst (1982) discuss at length the application of a political systems model to the analysis of educational policy. Allison (1971) is notable for his enlightening work of the Cuban Missile Crisis which opens up a channel to study the intra-organizational decision-making process.

Much of the research based on political assumptions has involved case studies of the policy process at the level where school systems intersect with external forces (Boyd, 1976; Peterson, 1976; Wirt, 1974). Corwin's (1970) study of the relationship between bureaucracy and conflict resolution in 24 midwestern high schools in the early 1960s explicitly modified rational bureaucratic assumptions to recognize the effects of professional socialization and external influences on internal decision-making processes. Mitchell et al. (1981) and Kerchner and Mitchell (1981) specifically focused on the effects of collective bargaining on school management and policy in their in-depth study of collective bargaining in California and Illinois. The value of the political model is that it provides a clearer understanding of the process of decision making among competing interests.

Organized Anarchy

This model is basically a product in 1970s out of the study of educational institutions. This model addresses choice processes under conditions of ambiguity in organizations. (Cohen

et al., 1972; Cohen & March, 1974; March & Olsen, 1976). These are organizations characterized by (a) problematic goals involving inconsistent and ill-defined preferences; (b) unclear technology in which processes for producing organizational outcomes, such as a more educated student, are unclear; and (c) fluid participation by decision makers in response to competing demands on attention and energy. They identify public, educational, and illegitimate organizations as conspicuous examples of organized anarchies, while noting that all organizations demonstrate these characteristics in part of time (March & Olsen, 1976).

By focusing on the significance of the process itself, this perspective moves beyond rational assumptions of goal-based decision making. These general ideas form the background for a contextual model of choice to describe decision making under conditions of ambiguity in goals, technology, and participation, labeled a garbage-can model (Cohen and March 1974, 1976). In a garbage-can process, decisions are the product of the outcome of the confluence of four relatively independent streams at a given time:

1. Choice opportunities: occasions in which the organization is expected to produce a decision.
2. Problem: the concerns of people inside and outside the organization, including non-choice-related issues such as family problems, career and status, interpersonal conflicts, and ideology.
3. Solutions: sometimes an answer looking for a question.
4. Participants: those entering and leaving a decision arena as

dictated by competing demands on time, "right of participation" as determined by organizational structure, norms, interest and duty.

The choice process is one in which problems, solutions and participants constantly move from one choice opportunity to another. Thus, the nature of the choice, the time it takes, and the problems it solves all depend on the intersection of the mix of available choices, the mix of problems that have access to the organization, the mix of solutions looking for problems, and the competing demands on decision makers at a specific time.

Elements of structure influence outcomes of the Garbage-can process by (a) affecting the time pattern of the arrival of problems, choices, solutions, or decision maker; (b) determining the allocation of energy by potential participants in the decision; and (c) establishing linkage among the various streams (March & Olsen, 1976).

Based on college and university data, the Garbage-can model was originally tested through a computer simulation (Cohen et al., 1972). The simulation study was followed by a series of case studies, mostly within educational organizations or policy arena within the United States and Scandinavia, exploring aspects of the Garbage-can process. Sproull, Weiner, and Wolf's (1978) study of the National Institute of Education followed in this tradition.

The most valuable contribution of this model can be represented by March & Olsen's (1976, p.11) description that the choice process provides an occasion for

executing standard operating procedures and

fulfilling role expectations, duties, or earlier commitments; defining truth and virtue, during which the discovers or interprets what happens to it, what it has been doing, what it is going to do, and what justifies its actions; distributing glory and blame for what has happened in the organization, thus, becoming an occasion for exercising; challenging, or reaffirming friendship, trust relationships, antagonism, power, or status relationships; expressing and discovering "self-interest" and "group interest" for socialization and an occasion for recruiting (to organizational positions or informal groups); having a good time, for enjoying the pleasures of taking part in a choice situation.

The organized anarchy approach, or the Garbage-can model as its practical expression, represents a conceptual leap from the assumption that decision-making is a process for achieving goals to one in which decision-making is often a process only loosely connected to organizational outcomes or individual intention. Given the conditions of decision-making related to teaching and learning, the organized-anarchy perspective helps to explain observations that the technical core of schooling is the area most subject to nonrational decision process (Hannaway & Sproull, 1979; Meyer & Rowan, 1978).

Among the various theories encountered in the study, the organized anarchy approach is particularly useful as a groundwork for integrating the notion of legitimacy into educational

decision making process. As Hannaway and Sproull (1979) clearly expressed, the organized anarchy approach marks a departure from the goal maximization paradigm. This approach focuses more on the role and significance of individual decision-makers than the outcome.

In the present study, the writer find the organized anarchy approach especially useful in his preparation of the guidelines of interview. The organized anarchy approach stresses that decisions are product of the outcome of the confluence of four relatively independent streams at a given time. They are (1) choice opportunities, (2) problem presented, (3) solution available and (4) participants. Based on these dimensions, the writer develops his course of interviews which focuses on collecting data on

1. identifying key actor decision making. It can be an individual or a group of people of similar interest,
2. how does an actor of decision making perceive the problem and available solutions,
3. how does decision makers perceive the formal structure and informal structure of the organization. It will undoubtedly affect their perception of choice opportunities,
4. how does an actor of the decision making perceive his role in the decision making process,
5. how does an actor of decision making perceive the role of other decision makers.

The above considerations provide a blue print of guidelines for the interviews.

Studies on educational decision making in local context are

few. It is impossible to categorize them into the aforementioned 4 models. A survey of these studies were provided by Tao (1986) in her study of the evolution of subject "Government and Public Affairs in local schools". Related studies include Chu's research on channels of communication in local schools (1981), Ho's study on school guidance program (1982), Cheng's study on relation between school effectiveness and leadership style (1985), Mak's study on relation between leadership style of school heads and school climate (1982), Wong's survey on job satisfaction factors among secondary school teachers (1980), (shared decision making being considered one of the job satisfaction factors), Hui's study on the effect of participative decision making on organizational effectiveness (1984), Tao's analysis of decision of offering a new academic subject (1986), and Lai's study on search behavior of school heads in the decision of the language issue (1987). A survey over these studies suggested that writers of these researches inclined to consider decision making in schools as either from a rational-bureaucratic model (Mak, Lai) or participative model (Wong, Ho). Tao was a rare exception. Her understanding of the school system was near to that of a political model as she suggested that decision making in local school sometimes responded actively to the environment and could be considered as an open system (Tao, 1986). Thus far, not a single study on decision making in the local context has employed the "organized anarchy" approach. The present study intend to explore the possibility of understanding the operation of the local education institution from this perspective.

The Multiplicity of Models

To justify the present study, it is necessary to establish that utilizing different models to explain the same event is possible. Graham Allison's: The Essence of Decision: explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis is a well quoted seminal work.

The Allison models and their interpretations

The best known case of parallel explanation is that presented by Allison who explains the Cuban Missile Crisis by three models. In the three models, decision-making is viewed as rational, organization and political process respectively. In each model, he tries to ask the same question, but the three models provide completely different types of answers. Therefore there are three different explanations of the Cuban Missile Crisis.

The merit of Allison's study lies in its pluralist approach that presented a challenge to the tradition of accepting any one as the model. By presenting three parallel explanations, Allison illustrated the possibility of a multiplicity of perspectives.

Kirst: Alternative Perspective

Kirst (1977) renamed the Allison models as the economic, political and organizational models and applied them to analyze the decision making process in school districts (in the U.S.) in order to examine its effect on the resulting expenditure after a school reform.

Peterson and Williams: Multiple dimensions

Peterson and Williams studied the Chicago School Board and used exactly the Allison models to analyse the decision making process.

"Each of the three models....offers a distinctive way of understanding the decision making of the school Board. It should be clear that, from the very beginning, however, that we believe that each model presents only one fact of the totality of the situation" (Peterson and Williams, 1977:153)

Lane: The "Right" Model

Lane (1983) applies four decision making models to Swedish higher education: incrementalism, the demographic model, the rational model and garbage-can model.

Crowson: Models as Prescriptions

Crowson (1975) also uses the Allison models. However, he urges that attention should be paid to the organizational and political constraints which are best delineated by Allison's other two models.

K.M. Cheng (1987) by making use of rationality and legitimacy as alternative concept to study the OECD Review (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) and CRE Review (Committee to Review Post-Secondary and Technical Education) has depicted two different pictures with the same "facts". He concludes that "the concept of legitimacy in explaining policy making processes proves to be a worthwhile hypothesis and lends itself to further research and theory

building.

The present study may be regarded as a immature attempt to apply the idea to a local school level.

The Language Issue

In view of the intensity of involvement, the time spent on search and prioritization, the language issue is a good case for studying of decision making in a local secondary school. Lai (1987) discovered that school heads, in order to reach a decision in the issue, consulted widely the opinion of members of the schools, with parents, with the government officials and the mass media. The school authorities have to choose between whether they would remain using English as the medium of instruction or they would switch to Chinese in various intensity.

The case for maintaining the status quo was very strong. For over 150 years Hong Kong was governed by the British government as a colony. English was the official language. In order to move up the social ladder, knowledge of the language seemed to be a distinctive asset. Kin (1982) described the phenomenon as "politics being integrated into the administrative system" whereas Endacott (1982) acknowledged the politics of Hong Kong as "government by consultation". English was widely used by the ruling elite. The situation remained unchanged even after the international movement of decolonization after the Second World War. One reason is that English was the language of the business world. To many who want to enter tertiary education, English is the only gateway. As a result, 1981 statistic showed that the proportion of secondary students enrolled in school

using English as medium of instruction was approximately 87%. This being the situation, any change even in a gradual manner would encounter much difficulties. The most notable difficulties were (1) resistance from teachers who claimed insufficient training in using Chinese as medium of instruction, (Department of Professional Studies, HKU, 1986) (2) insufficient Chinese text books of good quality, (Li, 1986) and (3) parents' reluctance. To some school authorities, adoption of Chinese as a teaching medium implies that the academic ability of their student intake is low. This explains the hesitation of some schools (Lai, 1987).

On the other hand, demand for change was also strong. In the early 1970s, young intellectuals strongly advocated making Chinese an official language. The "Chinese Movement", which was more closely tied to the desire for cultural identify than political nationalism, had a strong impact among school teachers. Parallel to the "Chinese Movement" was a series of academic studies on the efficiency of either using English or Chinese in the school setting. Some educationalists advocated the use of mother-tongue in schools. Lord (1976) identified 3 types of areas in the world adopting bilingualism, namely, the natural bilinguals, bilinguals by choice, and bilinguals by pressure. He opined that Hong Kong students are bilinguals by pressure and hence encountered more difficulties in their studies than school children in other places. His conclusion was echoed by other studies (Siu, 1977; Cheng, 1979).

Thereafter, extensive studies had been conducted to investigate the relationship between medium of instruction and

student academic achievement (Cheung, 1974; Poon, 1978; Siu, 1979; Chan 1979; Ho, 1980 etc.). The results of these studies reflected that students had more difficulties in most academic subjects with English as medium of instruction. Loi enlisted as many as 18 local researches on the effect of using English of medium of instruction (some notable studies included Kvan, 1969; Kwok, 1971; Cheng, 1973; Fu, 1975; Chan, 1976; Tam, 1979; Siu, 1979; Chan, Hinton and Yau, 1979)

Poon (1978) in concluding his extensive study on the difficulties encountered by Hong Kong primary school leavers, suggested that progressive shift to English in secondary school should be considered as an alternative to an abrupt change in medium of instruction.

The OECD panel concluded that, with many studies in similar situation, the use of English as a medium of instruction in secondary schools had magnified many of the problems associated with schooling in Hong Kong, such as excessive hours of homework, quiescent pupils, and rote learning. The panel recommended a progressive shift from mother tongue education in kindergartens and primary schools to genuinely bilingual programmes in the junior secondary.

In some cases, the shift to Chinese was initiated by the school heads or teachers who expressed that incompetence of their student intake made the change a necessity (Lai, 1987).

There were widespread discussions in the school councils, namely, the subsidized secondary school council which represented 80% of the Hong Kong secondary schools, the grant school council, and the prevocational school council. Each of the councils

expressed their views independently and exerted pressure on the government to adopt a certain stand. In 1984, the Education Commission which was formed on the recommendation of the OECD Report, adopted an ambivalent view on the language issue. It recommended that schools should be encouraged to use Chinese as the teaching medium and additional resources should be provided. However, the choice was left to individual school authorities. In May, 1986, the Education Department formally informed all government and aided schools (including subsidized schools and grants schools) that the government would adopt a policy of "positive discrimination" on the language policy, i.e. those schools who would use Chinese as a medium of instruction would be provided with additional resources. Unlike other countries which regarded uniformity in the language issue as a necessity, the government left the choice entirely to individual schools. Hence, all schools were to choose for themselves and be responsible for the consequences. The decision making was not a simple one. Given the ambiguities in the ultimate goal of school education in Hong Kong, the problem at stake was more than a choice between academic excellence and practical access towards a better career path. David Cheung (1985), chairman of The Hong Kong Subsidized Council and later an appointed member of The Legislative Council and The Education Commission, himself an enthusiastic advocate of adoption of Chinese as the medium of instruction, opined that he had a two-frontal battle, one declared on the conservative sector of the educators and the other, the social prejudices on Chinese Language. As decisions made in individual schools would be very far-fetched

effects, all sectors of the decision making "machineries" would supposedly be fully utilized. Roles of individual "actors" would be fully revealed. The present study attempts to delineate the choice-making process and to understand the situation from different perspectives.

Defining the Scope of Study

This study will be confined to the following areas of investigation:

1. The study represents research into the policy process and not the content. That is, the attention is not on what policies there are or how good the policies are, but on how policies are made.
2. The study is ~~not~~ intended to cover the entire decision process. It concentrates on the choice-making in the decision-process. It is the stage when the decision maker has to make selection from among options and formulate recommendations. In terms of educational policy-making, it corresponds to Jennings' stages of "discussion and debate" and "legitimization". (1977:39-40)

Alternately speaking, the decision-making process occurs in the black box of "political system" in Easton's systems model (Fig. 1).

Fig. 1 The Easton Model

(Source: Easton, 1965:112 modified by Jenkins, 1978:18)

Environment

The Political System

Inputs	Conversion/	Policy	Policy
Demands	Decision process	outcome	outputs
Supports	etc.		
Resources			

This is the process in which policy inputs are converted into policy outputs (Easton 1979 chap. 8 & 9). In particular, the policy-making in this study refers to the last stage in Easton's conversion process, where issues become converted into policy outputs (Ibid: 73).

The present study is a attempt to understand the decision-making process in a local secondary school as reflected in the language issue. Lai (1987) focus of his study was concerned about school heads' search behavior in the decision-making process of the language issue whereas the present study concentrates on the choice-making stage which follows the stage of search immediately.

Decision making process of local secondary schools in

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to explain the decision-making process using a *legitimacy* notion as an alternative to various kinds of *rationality* models. *Legitimacy* here takes its broadest definition as the recognized or accepted norm or belief that an actor in the process of decision-making possesses. The method adopted in the study is basically ethnographic.

Based on the study on the process of choice in the language issue in a local school, the writer argues that the policy-actors, in this case the various committees and the principal of the school, do not necessarily act according to a "mean-end" rationality model, or interact with one another because of conflicts in interests or power; but in a way that each committee had developed within itself an identity to be maintained or defended. The school management committee tried to maintain its identity as an open-minded and responsible policy-making body through its resolution to delegate the choice to the professionals of the schools. The subject panels fought hard to acquire their rights to make decision on their own. In doing so, the conventional legitimacy of the hierarchy was disturbed. Conflicts thus occurred. The writer infers that conflicts occur because certain actor was forced to submit to a new system of legitimacy. The actors had to strive hard to maintain their original legitimacy, or else they might lose their identity in policy making. In so doing, the center of attention was less the policy output than the process of the decision. That means the concern of individual actors was more on its legitimacy than on the output of the policy.

general had first been studied by the T.K. Ann Commission in 1973 which identified that up till then decision making in local schools was monopolized by the school management committees and school heads. The commission recommended that

- a. the principal should hold regular meeting with their staff, and
- b. that one seat on the school management committee should be reserved for teacher elected popularly from the staff team.

Related studies indicated that recently there was a trend of shared decision making in schools. (Chu, 1981; Ho, 1982; Wong, 1980; Hui, 1984; Tai, 1984; Tao, 1986). Tao (1986) in her study curriculum development in local schools, concluded that educational policy-making was a system which responded to social demands and answerable to professional opinion such as school teachers. A survey of the past studies suggested that decision-making process in local schools operates on a 3-tier structure: the school management committee, the school head and teachers. The school heads, in most cases, stand out as the convergent point of the information flow which is essential to decision making (Lai, 1987).

To facilitate communication between the school management committee and the teachers, the Education Department requested schools to establish either the Joint Consultative Committee or allow teacher representatives to attend school management committee meeting as observers. More than 80% of the school authorities chose to set up the Joint Consultative Committee which were composed of two representatives from the school

managers and three teachers elected popularly or whether the school head would attend the meeting depended on the school management committee or on the request of the teachers. The committee would meet at least twice a year and would discuss all matters concerning the schools that could not be settled by normal administrative procedure. In case of the language issue Lai's study (1987) indicated all school management committees of schools under survey had been notified or consulted. This indicates that:

1. The language issue has a wide coverage in term of decision-making,
2. Members of the school management committee, the school heads, and teacher representatives are decision-makers and hence are key informants in the study.

Chapter III Research Design

The methodology adopted in the study is basically a retrospective case-study borrowed much from ethnographic research.

Conditions and Design of The Research

The following conditions are essential to the writer's consideration of the research design:

1. The research started with a very vague question: How are education decisions made? The question does not constitute the necessary components of a "hypothesis" and it is not the intention of the researcher to formulate or verify any preset "hypothesis" at this stage.
2. The writer, though a school administrator himself, has never been an "insider" in the decision-making of the institution selected for case study. He will remain as an outsider all through the research.
3. He was reluctant to start with a theory which was borrowed from elsewhere. Whether theories generated elsewhere would apply to the Hong Kong scene were to be discussed during the research, and not before. Given the little amount of knowledge about the decision-making process in a school setting in Hong Kong, selection of theory would be arbitrary. Under these circumstances, early adherence to any arbitrarily selected theory would preempt explanation.
4. Since the research started somewhat afresh in a virgin ground, there was a dilemma of whether it should aim primarily at breadth or at depth. If the research has aimed at a general trend over a long period of time and a

vast number of events, it would have to ask very general questions about each event. Much of what was collected would, then, be abstract value judgments or general beliefs rather than "facts". If this were the case, the research might become a survey of "views" on decision-making which deny the writer the supporting "facts". The writer hence had chosen to start from depth, by doing intensive case studies, so that there was more opportunity to look into the "facts" as well as the "views".

It follows from the above conditions that the research should be an exploratory, retrospective, and ethnographic case study and rely heavily on the "key-informants" who participated in the policy-making process.

Choice of cases

The choice of cases is based on a number of considerations.

1. The availability of data. Availability of data was expected to be a problem in this kind of research, the language issue was chosen because it seems to present fewer difficulties than most. "Key informants" in the policy-making process were not difficult to identify and locate.
2. The "freshness" of the cases, yet the cases had to be remote enough from the current issues so that they would not be so sensitive as to prohibit data collection or defer informants from giving relevant information.
3. The "comprehensiveness" of the case. The language issue presented comprehensive decision-making exercises in the school setting which involved all parties of the 3-tier

policy-making machinery, namely - the school management committee, the school head and the professionals i.e. the teachers. In this case, all actors in the educational decision-making arena were mobilized. The implication of the case study thus may extend well beyond an understanding of the language issue.

Schools Selected for Research Purpose

It follows from pt.2 above that in order to obtain in-depth information, the writer should "station" in a school and observe long enough to collect the required "facts". These "facts" include not only what the actors consider as "event" or "hard facts" but also what they believe to be the "fabrics" of the events: roles of individual actors in the decision-making as they see themselves or as seen by others, different "weight" of influence (or "legitimacy" as used in this study) of different actors in the process, or furthermore, the ways individual actors attempt to legitimize themselves. Such situation being unique in itself, preempts the writer in doing quantitative study even on a small sample. A significant study of A. Hargreaves (1978) in his prolonged observation of classroom behavior of a group of middle school students proves the value of a single case study. The present study will concentrate on a one-school situation so as to trade precision and comprehensiveness for "generalizability".

The school selected is a standard secondary school of 8 years history and is at present operating 30 classes. Standard secondary schools make up more than half of all Hong Kong

secondary schools. It is selected solely because of the ensured accessibility to most of the informants and the likelihood disclosure of materials. If generalizability has to be regarded as a criterion for selection, then this school is typical of most aided secondary schools in size and history.

Research Process

Stage 1

Review of documents/literature on educational policy and policy-making in Hong Kong, especially those related to the secondary schools. Conceptualization and development of the research framework.

Stage 2

Interviews form the core of the research and provide basic materials for analyses. The writer, throughout his interviews, reminds himself to keep open to information and opinion provided by the informants. However, the writer also reminds himself that the present study has an objective to explore the concept legitimacy as an alternative perspective to understand decision-making process. The writer, therefore, intends to look for data that represent the manifestation of different dimensions of legitimacy i.e. legitimation and legitimization as discussed in the last section. This formed the basic rationale of the guidelines of interview (see appendix I).

Interview the school principal to

1. identify school organizational structure (both formal and informal)

2. identify usual policy-making process
3. identify the "key informants" - i.e.
members of the sponsoring bodies,
members of the school management committee, and
staff team who are involved in the decision-making
process of the issue.
4. collect relevant in-house documents concerning the issue.

Stage 3

Interview "key informants". the process cannot be predicted as one informant may direct the researcher to another one for some valuable information. In practice, the writer had interviewed 5 school managers, the principal, all members of the executive committee, all members of the academic committee and 2 other teachers as recommended by members of the academic committee. Beside formal interviews, the writer attended the several committee and subject meetings to "feel" the interpersonal climate of the organization.

Stage 4

Writing the report, further interviews may be required to fill up some "gaps" of information.

Research Method

The present study is basically a retrospective, ethnographic case study. Some aspects of the method employed are discussed below.

The Ethnographic Approach

Ethnographic approach is adopted as an alternative to the traditional "hypothesis-testing" type of research.

The term ethnographic, qualitative, phenomenological, naturalistic, anthropological and participatory research are used almost synonymously in the literature (Wilson, 1977:245; Kirk and Miller, 1986:9).

The dichotomy between ethnographic research and traditional psychometric approach is really one of difference in the data-theory relationship. Discussion of such a methodological dichotomy occurs in various branches of social science. Glasser and Strauss (1976), as sociologists, advocate the notion of grounded theory which aims at theory generation rather than theory verification. Aldrich and Ostrom, in a review of research in political science over twenty-five years, distinguished discovery from justification orientations (1980:864). Owen (1982), from the perspective of educational administration, identifies the dichotomy of naturalistic and rationalistic inquiry.

As a summary, a quotation from Aldrich and Ostrom may be useful. According to Ostrom (1980), the discovery orientation is "data-first" and the general sequence of analyses is:

1. data collection,
2. development of classification schemes,
3. inductive derivation of hypothesis, and
4. integration of hypothesis into a coherent theory.

On the other hand, the justification orientation is "theory first". The sequence of analyses consists of the following steps:

1. theory construction,
2. derivation of hypothesis from the discovery,
3. data collection and operationization, and
4. testing inductive inference.

There are two key aspects in the distinction between the two approaches: the objective and sequence.

The present study follows the "data-first" model. The objective is not to verify or test theories generated elsewhere, but to discover and generate theories from the data (Goetz and LeCompte, 1984:5; Glasser and Strauss, 1976). The study does not hope to find data to match a theory. Rather, it hopes to find a theory that explains the data (Goetz and LeCompte, 1984:4).

The present study is methodologically naturalistic (Goetz and LeCompte, 1984:10; Owen 1982:3): it allows the process to unfold itself. The research is empirical, but does not pretend to deny the researcher's influence on the research. Therefore it does not claim to be absolutely non-manipulative, but the manipulation were to minimize interventions rather than to strengthen them.

It is difficult to divide the research process into the conventional stages of problem-formulation, hypothesis-building, data collection, data analysis, hypothesis-testing and so forth. The stages will often intertwine and overlapped with each other, and occurred recurrently throughout the process of study (Burgess, 1985:9).

"Theory" in the research

It may be necessary to say a few words at this stage to

clarify the role of "theories" in this study.

The study does not start with a definite theoretical framework in the conventional sense. As Kirk and Miller described, the researcher often "arrives on the scene with considerable theoretical baggage but very little idea of what will happen next." (1986:30).

The orientation is discovery rather than testing of theory, but analysis is sequential - it is guided by the process of data collection and at the same time guided the process as what data should be collected. "Concepts emerge from the field, are checked and rechecked against further data, compared with other material, strengthened or perhaps reformulated." (Wood, 1984:51).

Ethnographic Research and Objectivity

Writers are split on the epistemology underlying ethnographic research. Silverman provides a very good summary of three approaches to ethnography: cognitive anthropology, interactionalist sociology and ethnomethodology (1985:96).

Cognitive anthropology regards ethnographic research as just a variation of empirical "Science" (Pelto and Pelto, 1978:19-23) which has always "celebrated objectivity" (Kirk and Miller, 1986:10-12).

The interactionalists admit objectivity, but recognize the objectivity as a network of social relations of which the researcher is an integral part (Barnes, 1963:121).

The pure ethnomethodologists regard ethnographic research as the anti-thesis of positivistic approach, as "interpretive" and "subjective", as opposite to the scientific paradigm (Cohen and

Manion, 1985:120). Others discuss ethnographic research in the context of contrasting naturalism with positivism (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983:1-9; Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

Therefore, an adoption of ethnographic methodology does not, as some believe, commit the writer to a particular school of epistemology. The stand of the present study is near to the category of cognitive anthropology which can be represented by the following quotation:

There is a world of empirical reality out there.

The way we perceive and understand that world is largely up to us, but the world does not tolerate all understandings of it equally. (Kirk and Miller, 1986:11)

This stand allows the possibility of multi-perspective to the understanding of the reality. In the case of this study it admits the complexities of the decision making of the language issue and at the same time, permits empirical test of the validity of the explanations with the reality.

Ethnographic research and research techniques

Many writers illustrate ethnographic research by identifying it with certain research techniques. This is not always the case.

Some writers try to substitute case-study (Cohen and Manlon, 1985) for ethnographic research, but case-studies could well start with a strong theoretical framework (e.g. Stake, 1980:B-4). Case studies are not always ethnographic. When Philip Coombs used his comparative case study methodology to look into non-

formal education, he started with 36 preset research items (Coombs and Ahmed, 1974:259-264). When Hans Weiler compared educational policy-making in the United States and the Federal Republic of Germany, he started with a strong framework borrowed from Habermas' theory of legitimacy (Weiler, 1983a). These are case-studies, but are not research in the ethnographic paradigm. Others commit ethnographic research to fieldwork (see Burgess, 1985a:1). This is to a large extent true, but ethnographic research often also relies on archival materials (e.g. Pelto and Pelto, 1978:116).

Still others equate ethnographic research with participant observation (Cohen and Manion, 1985:122-124), but there are obvious cases of ethnographic research where participant observation is impossible, or non-participant observation is more appropriate.

The understanding in this study is that ethnographic research is a term in methodology, not in techniques. As a matter of fact, many writers regard the use of multiple methods as one of the main features of ethnographic research (Goetz and LeCompte, 1984:3; Wolcott, 1980:F-4).

The methods adopted in this research are multimodal (Wilson, 1977:255): documentary analysis and interviews in the main, but archival materials, newspaper clippings, and conversations also play important roles. On the whole, the methods adopted were not predetermined by the theoretical framework, but were pragmatically decided by requirements of efficiency and validity in data-collection (Goetz and LeCompte, 1984:3).

The research operated under a flexible design. The process

of the research was shaped during the process of the research. The research tactics were continuously revised so as to achieve the highest validity. This is another characteristic of ethnographic research (Burgess, 1985b:8).

Some Methodological Issues

Given the special nature of ethnographic type of research, problems encountered in the study could not receive neat solution according to standard formulae. It is necessary to look into some methodological issues that were encountered and to explore the possible solution.

1. The "outsider-insider" issue

The aim of this study is to understand a social process (Burgess, 1985b:8-9) which is decision-making. The writer has to consider that in an such a social process the participants carried with them not only facts, but also values. In some preliminary interview conducted in this study, the writer found that different actors depicted different pictures of the issue with the same "facts". They clearly carried with them certain values which formed the "culture" of that social group. The "insider" (researcher as an participant) therefore enjoy a first-hand experience of the "culture" being studied. However, it can be argued the other way round that an outsider has an advantage of less value-tied to the process and more sensitive to the "culture".

Equal numbers of notable studies have been produced by writers who acted as "insider" or "outsider" with the cases

they studied. For the former, the best-known is done by Maurice Kogan who researched into the policy-making process as an ex-member of the process (Kogan, 1975). However, in case of Jennings and Allison, the researchers remain outsider throughout the process (Jennings, 1977; Allison 1971).

In this research, the "outsider" position of the researcher makes him suffer from the "opaqueness" of the scene, but at the same time it gives him the privileged position of an impartial "third-party".

2. A retrospective research

The present study is retrospective in nature. It enjoys the "impartiality" of the information collected since the issue was remote enough to be "politically" sensitive. However, information collected solely on the informants' recollection gives rise to the problem of reliability.

3. Locating key informants

Unlike interviews in controlled experiments or surveys, key informants are typical individuals who, instead of being chosen by sampling, are chosen by deliberation so as to ensure representativeness (Goetz and LeCompte, 1984:119-20). They are expected to provide special and independent information from their perspectives. In the case of this study, the members of the school management committee, the principal, and the members of academic committee are considered as target informants. When time constraints were significant, the reduction of number of informants was based on the expected returns of information rather than by statistical sampling.

The search for key informants is a continuous process. The research begins with little knowledge about "who is who" in the decision-making arena, but as interviews accumulate, it becomes clearer who are the "key" informants that deserve to be interviewed.

4. Key informant interviews

The main body of the study is done through key informant interviews.

The exploratory nature of the research determines the naturalistic features of the interviews. The interviews are unstructured, covering only open ended broad topics. In order to ensure information in the common area, the writer has a guideline of the interview which would be disclosed to the informants (See Appendix I). The informants are allowed, if not encouraged to elaborate in whatever direction they choose. The guideline of the interview is so designed that the informants have the chance to speak on (1) the profile of an educated student; (2) the objectives of the language issue; (3) who should be involved in the decision-making and why; (4) in what way the decision making process in the language issue conforms to or differs from the usual decision-making process.

5. Reporting

As is with most ethnographic research, the research will be rounded up in "thick descriptions" (Opens, 1982:7-9) which are supposed to carry not only the facts or the events in the cases, but also the texture, the quality and the context. (Ibid)

The report of the study on the decision-making in the language issue is divided into two parts: the "facts" and the "analyses". This is a deliberate device to separate the "perceived" from the "speculated". Care is taken in the reporting of the "facts" to avoid imposing self-imposed cause-effect relations to the data, and to leave ample room for "speculation" from various perspectives.

Chapter IV Report on the Management of the School

A General Picture

The school under study (hereinafter referred to as School S) is a standard secondary school, the kind of which comprises more than half of the Hong Kong secondary schools. Standard secondary schools have the following common characteristics which have vital significance over school management.

1. They were built with similar construction layout, internal design, and furnished with same amount of teaching equipment.
2. The running cost, including staff salary, administrative fund, maintenance and repair, are borne by the government. Strict control over financial matter is effected through the Code of Aid, a "handbook" of operation of all government aided schools.
3. Class organization and staff strength are similar. In most circumstances, standard secondary school operate 30 classes and employ 51 teaching staff, 6 clerical staff and 11 janitors and cleaning workers.
4. Since the member of senior posts of teaching staff is stipulated in the Code of Aid which permits no flexibility, management structure and hierarchy of authority in most schools are similar.

It should be added here that all government aided schools, whether they are standard schools or not, are under very tight government control over its management through financial support. In this sense, additional staff and teaching resources can be a significant determinant for schools in adopting any major policy

such as the language policy. Also in the same perspective, Hong Kong secondary schools are very similar in their physical outlook. Since the present study starts on a new ground i.e. decision making from a legitimacy perspective in local school context, school S which represents a large number of secondary schools, is a good choice.

Schools S has 8 years of history. Intakes of its form one student improved significantly from the fourth year of operation. The current intakes are students in Band 1 (out of 5 bands with Band 1 representing the top 20% of the student population). Student performance in the Advanced Level Examinations and the Hong Kong School Certificate Examinations are not especially outstanding, with an average passing rate of 50% and 65%, respectively.

School Management Committee

The School Management Committee is empowered by law, namely the Education Ordinance (Hong Kong Law Cap. 279) and the Education Regulations, to manage the school. It is, in theory, the highest authority in the school in relation to policy making.

The committee members are appointed by the sponsoring body on three-year-terms of service and are eligible for reappointment. It is a practice of the sponsoring body that school managers shall serve in the committee for not more than 9 years. Turn-over in the membership is meager except for those who resign on their own accord, mainly due to emigration. The School Management Committee of school S is composed of twelve

members. Of the twelve managers, six are businessmen, four are professionals such as dentist, medical practitioners and engineer. The remaining two are priests. As required by law, the committee elects among themselves a supervisor of the school who represents the committee to oversee the daily operation of the school. The committee meets twice a year to decide on major issue as put up on the agenda by the supervisor or suggested by the school principal. As revealed in the meeting minutes in the last two years, the issues in the committee meetings include:

1. the membership of the School Management Committee - retirement, election etc.;
2. financial matters such as items of major repairs, purchase of equipment which involves a large amount of school fund;
3. staff matters such as promotion and appointment of senior posts; and
4. major academic policy as the language issue.

The exercising of authority of the committee is to a large extent limited by its low frequency of meeting and the members' perception of their scope of duties. One committee member who is a prominent dentist told the writer that the management committee was not supposed to discuss logistical aspects of policies. "The committee's major function is to ensure that nothing gone wrong with the school." (MC2), he said. He also believed that it was a common understanding of most of the members. In some other cases, the authority of the committee is limited by the professional know-how of the members. A member, himself a successful businessman, expressed that academic matters such as the language issue is the "business" of the principal and the

teachers, "I don't think I am competent and suitable to discuss these matters. I simply leave it to the professionals (the principals and teachers)". However, he thought that the final result of the language policy of the school, should be presented to the committee for endorsement as a token of respect. One member expressed that he knew very little about education in general, and schools in particular. He confided that in most meetings he found himself difficult to participate in the discussion and decision-making because of the lack of expertise and background information. He agreed, however, that as a supervisory body responsible to the sponsoring body and the general public, the School Management Committee should be consulted in all major policies of the school (MC4). It should, however, be noted that the committee has never stated very clearly the definition of "major policies". It thus leaves rooms of ambiguities to all members of the school, including the principal to the teachers, as to what matters they should seek the committee's approval or the guidelines.

The Supervisor

The supervisor, though himself a member of the school management committee, can be regarded as an independent actor of decision making in this respect. He is the only school manager who makes personal contact with the teachers. As a supervisor, he is expected by the Education Department to be physically present in the school once a week or at least once in a month's time. However, the supervisor admitted that he could not comply with the expectation. He met the principal once every month or

two. The initiative was always on the part of the principal. His authority as a supervisor is in some way confined by his own understanding of his ability. He expressed that "The principal is a professional in school administration whereas I am not. I have to trust him. My position is to ensure the proper operation of the school and that the ideal of the sponsoring body be fully manifested." (MC1) In the eyes of the teachers, the supervisor is a humble and respected middle-aged gentleman who appears to be a good listener to those who have personal contact with him. He is perceived by most teachers as warm, open and approachable.

In sum, the general operation of the School Management Committee can be summarized into the following points:

1. the committee regards itself as an authorizing body of the school administration. Its consent has to be sought in major issues of the school.
2. the committee has full respect for the professional opinions of the principal and teachers on academic matters. Language issue is considered as one of the kind.
3. in daily operation, the supervisor and the principal decided the "agenda" to be put up to the committee's awareness or in the formal meetings.
4. the principal played a very important role as he was the "goal-keeper" of information flow between the school management committee and the school in its daily operation.

The Principal

A local research suggests that the principal is the convergent point of information flow between the management side (the School Management Committee) and the staff side (the

teachers). (Lai, 1987). The principal possessed a very unique position in decision making in the school context. In most cases, the principal was the actor who defined the problem, searched for alternative solution, consulted involving parties and then put up the case to the School Management Committee through the supervisor. The principal of school S was a man in his early forties. He has served in the school as principal from its inception. He has been a school teacher for eleven years before he was appointed to the present post. He described himself as a person who sought harmony and staff contention as his major goals as a school administrator. "I am a better teacher than an administrator." (TS1).

According to article 93 of the Education Ordinance, the principal is responsible for all matters concerning teaching and student discipline. In practice, the principal is responsible for virtually all aspects of the school (Chan, 1986:44). The organizational climate of the school is very much the product of the principal's style of behavior. He tried to build up organizational structure, define the functions of various committees and expected a certain kind of "law and order" to evolve on its own. However, he was a person who reacted very passionately to people's requests or criticisms and changed his mind instantly. In open discussions, he was easily led away by strong proponents. The principal's seemingly inconsistency in administration created certain uneasiness among his subordinates.

The principal regarded himself as more people-oriented than task-oriented in terms of leadership style. The duty list of the principal was not included in the Teachers' Manual compiled by

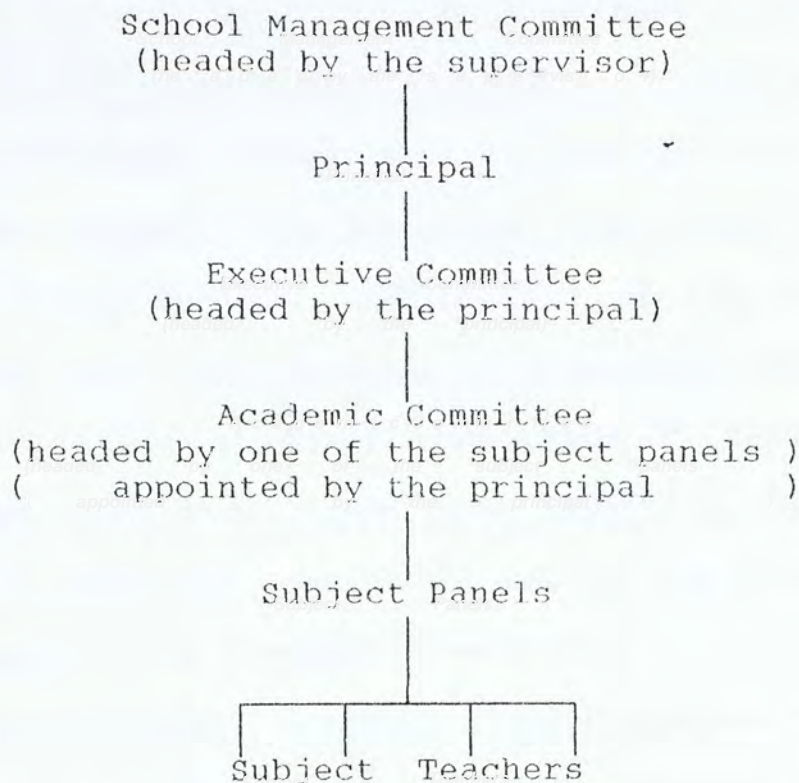
himself. "It is very difficult to define my duty. I have the whole spectrum of management work to look after." the principal remarked. "Flexibility is important." Flexibility was understood as accepting exceptional cases to the established rules.

All teachers interviewed remarked that the principal was a democratic leader who sought his subordinates' view in most circumstances. Reaction to the style varied among teachers. "He is a gentleman who will never say 'no' to any person." one subject panel remarked (TS5). She preferred the principal to be more authoritative in leadership. She and some other subject panels remarked that the subject panels enjoyed much freedom in decision making concerning their departments. However, many of them did not enjoy the plenary discussion sessions of which the principal often used as arenas to solve problems concerning several departments. "These sessions were full of heated debates, efforts to define and redefine educational objectives and authority of various committees and posts." One subject panel remarked. These attempts to "define and redefine" educational objectives and roles of actors of decision making created a sense of instability in management. To the writer of the present study, it was the clue to understand the perceived role of individual actors which formed the basic fabrics of legitimacy.

The Executive Committee

The principal was assisted by an Executive Committee and in matters concerning the academic affairs, the Academic Committee. An organizational chart appeared on the Teachers' Manual is at

appendix 2. A simplified version concerning academic affairs in is as the following:



The Executive Committee was designed to be an highest advisory committee of the principal in all administrative matters. According to the Teachers' Manual, the main duties of the Executive Committee was

1. to co-ordinate the work of all the administrative committees and subject panels of the school;
2. to discuss the general affairs of the school which are not dealt by other committees;
3. to plan any special event such as the Opening Ceremony of the school, Graduation Ceremony, etc.;
4. to make decision on any emergency events or matters referred by other committees;
5. to discuss and decide on any problems raised by the principal.

The principal acted as the chairman of the Executive Committee. Other members of the committee were heads of the following committees - academic, disciplinary, student welfare and counseling, extra-curricular activities, religious education, careers and resources. They were in general the most senior teachers of the school. In practice, the committee met once every two or three months. Efficiency of the committee was hampered by the fact that members of committee did not possess sufficient information of other committees to assist in making major decisions. In most cases, the Executive Committee refer the decision to relevant committees and in the circumstances of the language issue, the Academic Committee.

In the eyes of many teachers, the Executive Committee was not a policy making committee. Its major function was to assist the principal to find out to which committee a task should be delegated. However, members of the committee were not satisfied with present situation.

The Academic Committee

The Academic Committee had 5 members with the Chinese department head as chairman. The other members were not subject panels themselves. "They are efficient young teachers who can assist in activities such as making time-table, resources," the head of the committee remarked. The major duties of the Academic Committee as stipulated in the Teachers' Manual

1. to promote a learning atmosphere at school,
2. to help different subject panels to develop school-based

Inset;

3. to take care of all academic affairs of the school;
4. to coordinate the different subject panels and help to solve any problem concerning each subject;
5. to decide on matters concerning examinations, test, syllabuses, homework, subjects offered for different forms, textbooks, teaching aids, library and other aspects of teaching,
6. to plan the time-tables and give suggestions on the allocation of classrooms.

Members of the committee were selected on their personal basis and not representing their respective subjects. They felt that they were neither competent nor comfortable to discuss matters concerning other subjects (TS7, TS8). In this case, matters involving individual subjects were referred to the relevant subject heads and those concerning more subjects would be settled by special plenary session with all involved parties present. Of the latter case, one typical example was the matter of allocation of periods to individual subjects in 1986 which will be discussed in the next chapter.

The Academic Committee is not satisfied with its present role in academic affairs in the school. It intended to take the lead to raise the teaching efficiency of teachers and academic achievement of students. However, in the eyes of other teachers, especially those subject heads not included in the committee, the Academic Committee did not possess the authority and resources to attain its goals. The differences was magnified in the language issue as both the Academic Committee and the subject heads claimed to have the authority to decision making of the issue.

The Subject Panels

Subject departments or subject panels as they were more often referred to, formed the basic unit of teaching activities. According to the Teachers' Manual of School S, the major supervisory work of the subject heads were:

1. to formulate curriculum policy for the subject in line with the general curriculum policy of the school;
2. setting the aims and objectives and determining the content of the entire curriculum at different classes or form levels;
3. ensuring supervision and assistance for newly appointed teachers and student-teachers; assisting the principal in supervising the staff of the department.

With no single exception, subject heads in School S were the most senior teachers of their respective departments. According to the Code of Aid, only heads or departments and chairman of major committee were eligible for promotion to a senior rank, namely, the senior graduate masters or assistant masters in the case of non-graduates.

In this way, most subject heads in School S, in the eyes of other members of the department, possessed both positional power and resource power as a leader. They were regarded as experts and chief advisors to the principal in matters concerning their respective departments.

In the eyes of the subject panels, the Academic Committee merely served as a co-ordinator and did not have the power to override decision made in the subject meetings.

The Teachers

Teachers in school S could influence policy making of the school in several ways:

1. As a member of a subject panel, he could put up his case in the subject meeting;
2. As a member of the school, he could put up his case through Joint Consultation Committee composed of school managers and teachers;
3. As a participants in plenary discussion sessions (often held to resolve major issue of the school), he could put up or defend his case and demands a resolution;
4. As a teacher of the school, he could put up his case or discuss his problem in person with the principal.

Item one was a commonly utilized avenue to all teachers. Items two was comparatively less common. The organizational climate of school S was shaped by the frequent utilization of item 3 and 4. Both item 3 and 4 are regarded by many teachers as their unique opportunities to gain what they wanted which would not be pursued in the hierarchical structure.

The active reaction of the principal to individual teachers' requests encouraged the utilization of item 4. It opened up a unique avenue of information flows and also add to the instability of the "formal" organization structure.

The Organizational Climate

In sum, school S possesses a loose bureaucratic system which allows teacher participation in all levels. The school had a

tradition to respect both expertise and participating approach in connection with educational decision making. Expertise was provided by the Executive Committee, the Academic Committee and in some occasions, the subject heads. On the other hand, decisions were sometimes are by participation of whole "population" which provided it with the popular acceptance or "legitimacy". Tensions between various actors periodically occurred because the role and duties of various actors were not well defined.

It should also be noted the frequent utilization of plenary discussion sessions created a sub-culture that being vocal, expressive and persistent was important in the decision making process.

School Management In Operation

In daily operation of the school, the influence of the Management Committee is not visually present. Most of the managers do not have personal knowledge of the teachers and students. As a result, the principal stood out as the key figure in daily administration and the decisions connected with it. Decision making was therefore a process of interactions of various actors i.e. the principal, various committees, the subject panels and the teachers. The following paragraphs attempt to give an account of the perceived roles of various actors and illustrations of how these conflict of roles materialized into choice-making in the decision-making process.

The Episode of Allocation of Periods

The unique roles of these actors could best be understood in their reaction in the incident concerning allocation of periods to subjects in early 1986.

In March, 1986, the subject heads of the English, Chinese and Mathematics requested that, in order to improve the academic standard of the subjects, the number of periods of the respective subjects should be increased. As a result, the increase of number of periods allocated to these meant a cut on other subjects.

The Executive Committee was consulted in this matter. Opinion was divided. Discussions mainly concentrated on how a decision could be made. The matter of teaching effectiveness and relative significance of different subjects was not discussed. A member, himself the co-ordinator of school resource and also head of a cultural subject, remarked that "as a member in the Executive Committee, what I can contribute most is a balance of view and to see things in a wider perspective." (TS7) "I have to be fair and impartial. I should not unconsciously try to defend the interest of my own subject in the capacity of Executive Committee member. My job here is to ensure that policies are made in order (according to the stipulated procedure)." (TS7)

The Academic Committee discussed the matter with heated debates. The representativeness of the members explained their respective stands. The co-ordinator of the committee, who was head of Chinese department led a lengthy discussion on the increasing importance of language education. Other members disagreed and argued that social and cultural subjects were

equally important on the basis of holistic education. Their different emphasizes of education and expectation of an ideal student profile were fully revealed in the discussion.

Members of the Academic Committee urged to come to a conclusion by voting which the co-ordinator objected. She insisted to consult other teachers. In the eyes of other members, the move was to protect her own interest as a subject head. It was regarded as contrary to her position of the coordinator of the Academic Committee. These views were, however, not expressed the formal meeting. As a result, the Academic Committee replied that, in view of the enormous after-effect of the decision, a plenary session should be held to discuss the matter and it should be convened by the principal. A special committee comprised by all subject panels were formed and three meetings were held. The meetings were filled with heated debates over the fundamental principles of education, the value of individual subjects and an acceptable procedure of searching a resolution of the matter. The final resolution was that the number of periods allocated to English and Chinese be increased by one and nil for Mathematics. Periods for Design and Technology be reduced from 3 to 2 and Biblical Knowledge from 2 to 1.

The matters was thus settled by "participation". According to one subject panel, there were much lobbying and persuasion between each session of discussion. On 27 May of the same year, the principal conveyed the resolution to all teacher in the form of a circular. In the Executive Committee meeting immediately following, a member queried the validity of the decision made in

the plenary session. He reasoned that the special committee was initiated by the Academic Committee as a response to the Executive Committee's request, therefore the decision had to be endorsed by the Executive Committee in order to be valid. He expressed that he agreed with the decision in itself but he disagreed with the process of the decision making. This is the first time that the matter of legitimacy was raised in the school. One member tried to argue that since the principal was the convener and all members of the Executive Committee were present in the meeting as representing their respective subjects, the resolution should be valid. The principal resolved the issue by adopting an endorsement in retrospect. In the writer's view, the member's attempt was an act to defend the legitimacy of the Executive Committee as the highest advisory body of the principal. The principal's action could be interpreted, as suggested in the earlier discussion, as an attempt to legitimate the decision. Moreover, the whole episode could be viewed as a resolution over the conflict of solution by dual process of consultation approach (with experts who had no personal interest and with utmost objectivity) and participative approach (with all who had involving interests).

The above illustration clearly revealed the texture of interaction of various actors of decision making. It also hinted on a general pattern of how individual actors responded to a new issue. This is to be discussed in more detail in the following sub-sections.

The Principal

In the eyes of the teachers, the Management Committee was an authorizing unit. It usually responded to issues put up to it. It seldom took initiatives to search for problems and solution by itself. In regard to this general understanding, the principal was expected to be "front-line" decision maker who decided on whether an issue should be pursued. As an administrator, he had set up his consultation mechanism. However, due to the ambiguities of roles of the committee and his personal deliberation to maintain a democratic and responsive public image, the mechanism did not function effectively. In the case of the reallocation of periods to certain subjects, he had actually "bypassed" his main advisory committees i.e. the Executive Committee and Academic Committee to adopt a resolution made at a plenary session.

The principal repeatedly emphasized that a good administrator had to be democratic and responsive to others' need. His sense of democracy and responsiveness created an popular image which he fought hard to uphold. This "image" is what the writer refer to as legitimacy in the present study.

The Executive Committee

Members of the Executive Committee are appointed in reference to their positions as coordinators of major committees of the school. All of the members perceived themselves as representatives of their respective committee and also as advisors to the principal on matters relating to the school as a whole. The dual role of the representativeness of their "constituencies" and care for the holistic development were often

in conflict with each others. This explained the reaction of the committee in the issue of allocation of period. The committee tended to be objective. It demanded a proposal from the Academic Committee with supporting detail. In this way, it could maintain its impartiality and its role of decision-maker. The committee took a similar position in the language issue.

The Academic Committee

It was stipulated in the Teachers' Manuel that the Academic Committee was to co-ordinate all matters relating to academic affairs. However, a member confided that he did not think that the committee had the authority to do so. "It is due to the 'weak' membership and historical reason" (TS7). By "weak membership" he meant that members of the committee were relatively junior teachers and, with the exception of the co-ordinator, were not subject heads. He believed that this composition had significant implication on how other teachers perceived the committee. By historical reasons, he reiterated that the past coordinators of the committee were not people of ambition or strong character. He cited the subject co-ordinators' meeting as an example. The meetings which were held twice a year were convened by the principal, not the co-ordinator of the committee.

The present committee was not satisfied with their low profile and demanded a more significant role in the school.

Subject Panels

Though the subject panels did not form a coherent group in the organizational structure of the school. Yet, in many occasions of decision-making, they appeared to be actors who had similar consideration and acted collectively. It was a common understanding among the subject panels that they were experts in their respective subjects (TS4, 7). They perceived themselves as accountable to the principal, not the Academic Committee, for their decision concerning their departments. Some regarded the ambition of the co-ordinator of the Academic Committee to increase the committee's influence as a threat to their "authority". Their reaction was to neglect the policy. At the beginning of the academic year 1985-86, the Academic Committee announced that in order to raise the teaching performance of teachers, all subject departments were requested to conduct classroom visitation among the panel members. The request did not receive any response. It was not until the next academic year when the principal made a formal request at the staff meeting that the departments began to make arrangement for classroom visitation.

Teachers

Teachers in school S were basically satisfied with the mechanism of policy making in the school. They had trust in the bureaucracy. They regarded plenary sessions as signs of democratic tradition of the school which they were proud of. A Mathematics teacher commented on the heated debates of the plenary sessions by saying that "It is no harm to put forth one's demand in a forceful way, so far it is for the benefit for the

school.".

From the description above, it is quite clear that school S worked on a hierarchical structure of decision making though in many circumstances the structure and procedure were not strictly observed. There were different channels between actors of decision making through the hierarchy. In the term of the Organized Anarchy model, participants of decision making entered and left the process of policy making at different time and junctures. The overall organization climate was one of open, participative harmony seeking.

Chapter V The Making of the Language Policy

In this chapter, the writer attempts to give a detail account of the events leading to the making language policy. The course of events may, for the sake of clarity of description, be divided into three stages. The first stage started with the government's appointment of OECD panel in 1981 to the release of the Education Commission's Report No. 1. This is a period of the emergence of the language issue in school S. The second stage ended immediately preceding, the Education Departments circular for additional resource for schools adopting Chinese as medium of instruction in May 1986. This is a period of the language policy in the making. The third stage started with the Education Department's circular to the final resolution in July 1986.

By the time when the Kenneth Topley, the Secretary for Education designate, announced that "an international panel of visitors has been appointed by the governor to conduct an overall review of Hong Kong Education System" in June, 1981, there were discussions among teachers in School S on the language issue (TS5, TS6). Some "progressive" teachers who had been activists in the campaign for Chinese Language regarded that the appointment of the overseas panel meant a success of the Course of Chinese Language Movement. They believed that language issue would be dealt with in the panel's report and were very optimistic about the outcome. The subject heads of Mathematics and Science department were especially enthusiastic. The head of Physics department expressed that language issue was a battle between colonial education and liberal education. Adoption of Chinese as the medium of instruction was not only an end in

itself, but also a symbol of democratization of the Hong Kong education system (TS7).

At this stage, teachers involvement in the discussion was limited to a few. Some teachers avoided the topic because they thought that as teaching professionals, they should not be involved in political issue (TS7). However, quite unconnected with the view that the language issue as an instrument toward democratization of education was an popular awareness of lowering academic performance of students. (TS7, TS4) There was therefore discussion of the feasibility of using Chinese as medium of instruction purely from the perspective of teaching effectiveness. Some discussed the matter with the principal informally. These phenomenon reflected that teachers in school S were substantively converting the issue into a policy agenda. The principal was aware of the possible output of these discussions and dialogues. He began to discuss the matter with some senior subject heads (TS1). However, he expressed that the time was not yet ripe for presenting the case to the supervisor nor to the management committee. "I used to present the school business in concrete resolutions for the supervisor's consideration. It was also the way he desired." the principal remarked. (TS1) the principal admitted that in doing so he had to make preliminary choices to condense the matter and limit the solutions to a few. In term of decision making process, the issue was not yet formulated into an agenda.

At this juncture, the main policy body i.e. the Management Committee, and the principal with his major advisory bodies did not regard the language policy as an issue of policy making.

The OECD report was formally released on 6th May, 1983. Against all public expectations, the government made no indication of adoption of the report. Most teachers in School S expressed their welcome of the report and were anxious to see that the government would adopt the recommendation therein (TS1, TS5).

Immediately after the release of the Education Commission's Report No. 1, a group of "progressive" teachers requested for an overall review of the language policy of the school (TS5, TS6). Some teachers took initiative to compile materials on the effectiveness of using either English or Chinese as medium of instruction. The materials were circulated among the subject heads (TS5, TS6).

Most English teachers, the head of the English department in particular, had reservation for using Chinese as medium of instruction. They believed that less exposure to English would result in the lowering of the English standard of the students. The principal found it difficult "to reach a unified policy to please everybody" (TS1).

The release of the Education Commission's Report No. 1 marked the second stage of development of the language issue in school S. At this stage, the principal faced two groups of teachers with conflicting opinions on the issue. On one hand were the English teachers who had reservation about the use of Chinese. On the other hand were a larger number of teachers who were in favour of using Chinese. The latter's motivation was

mainly from the point of view of academic effectiveness. "I am alarmed by the lowering of proficiency standard of English of the students. I hope they (the students) can learn Mathematics better through using Chinese (as medium of instruction)." a Mathematics teacher remarked. (TS7) It should also be noted that some teachers who advocated using Chinese had an ulterior motive of using the language issue as a tool to achieve what they believed as democratization of the educational system.

At this juncture, the subject heads of Biblical Knowledge and Economic and Public Affairs (EPA) approached the principal and placed a formal request for using Chinese as medium of instruction. In response to the writer query about the procedure, the subject head of EPA remarked, "I have never thought of consulting the Academic Committee. This is an important issue. Only the principal has the authority to make the decision. You know, all my fellow subject teachers supported me in this matter." (TS8) the subject head of Biblical Knowledge expressed that she had discussed the matter with the co-ordinator of the Academic Committee. Her impression after the discussion was that as a formal petition, her case would go through the formal structure i.e. from Academic Committee via the Executive Committee to the principal. To her, the procedure was unduly long. Considering the time element, she approached the principal directly. In doing so, she did not mean to be irrespect the two committees' concerned.

The crucial point at this juncture was the response of the principal. He fully understood the significance of decision he made and also the procedure of how he made it. His considerations

of the final decision were:

1. If the matter was to be handled by the management committee, the result would possibly be a unified policy which would upset at least one party;
2. If he ignored the request of the two subject heads, he might be regarded as irresponsible and autocratic.

With these considerations in mind, the principal chose to avoid making a general policy concerning the language issue. He tried to contain the request of the two subject departments as matters on a departmental level which could be settled by the departments themselves with the covering approval of the principal. The supervisor was not consulted on this matter. The principal reasoned that since the matter was not formulation of a policy, therefore the approval of management committee was not required. He therefore complied with the request of the two subject heads and planned to change the medium of instruction from the academic year 1986-87. In March 1986, before the principal made a formal announcement of his action, members found out in a subject heads meeting through the proposed text-book list that two subjects would change to Chinese as medium of instruction. It came to the subject heads as a shock. There were queries over the procedure and also request for a comprehensive policy concerning the language issue. In the eyes of some subject heads, policy of the language issue had been made. At least a precedent case had been set. Some teachers were surprised to learn the change of the language used in E.P.A. and B.K. without a wide consultation. Most teachers expected the formulation of a unified policy before any individual subject

should make a change. They expected in the process of consultation, their opinion would be considered.

In the second stage of the policy making, the major actors were the two subject heads and the principal. However, it should be noted that the other actors from the Executive Committee to the teachers were aware of the situation and tried to formulate their choice in response to the case of the two subjects as facts accomplished.

The third stage of the language scene started in May 1986 when school S received a circular from the Education Department concerning additional resources for school adopting Chinese as medium of instruction. The circular was duplicated and posted up in the staff rooms for staff information.

The Education Department's circular created a new scene of the language issue in school S. Firstly, as required by the Education Department, a general policy of language had to be formulated. In this way, the supervisor and school management committee had to be consulted. Secondly, as it was a "hot-issue" of all Hong Kong schools, all teachers were involved in discussions of the matter in one way or the other. All teachers wished to involve in the process of policy making.

In the School Management Committee meeting held in June, the language issue was brought up for discussion. In the meeting, the supervisor expressed that this was a professional matter and could be decided by the principal and the teachers (MC1, TS1). He was echoed by two other members. The supervisor reiterated that the role of the committee was basically supervisory. They

would leave logistical part of the policy to the principal. The committee resolved that it had no specific ruling concerning the language policy. The principal, with the assistance of the teachers were given the power to decide. The resolution was immediately made known and was welcomed by the teachers as the management committee anticipated and desired.

At this juncture, the principal was expected to widely consult his subordinates and formulate a unified language policy immediately. On the part of teachers, a group of subject heads who were in favour of Chinese as medium of instruction requested the principal to establish a "search" committee and to hold plenary sessions for all teachers to discuss the matter. The "search" committee would collect materials on effectiveness of using of practicalities such as text-books and glossary. At this juncture, the English department head requested for a general survey of parents' choice. These suggestions were brought up in the Executive Committee's meeting. In the meeting, it was resolved to drop the idea of "search" committee and parents' opinion survey would be held instead. A member recalled the meeting and remarked that that was a "political" deal. The "search" committee would undoubtedly confirmed the use of Chinese while the parents would object to it. The result was to drop both." (TS4)

In the plenary sessions which were chaired by the principal, resolved that the choice of the medium of instruction was left with the departments, subject to the approval of the principal. The year long debate thus came to a conclusion.

Chapter VI Discussion of Findings from the Perspectives of Rationality and Legitimacy

In this section, the language issue of School S will be analyzed from two perspectives: the rational perspective and the legitimacy perspective.

The analysis will identify the critical junctures in the decision-making process. These are the points that require explanation. The main body of the analysis will then try to provide explanation for the junctures, using different frameworks of thought.

The Critical Junctures

The first question is: Why should school S consider the language issue? What were the main considerations of different actors of policy making? The second question: What were the specific methodology employed by different actors? The third question: Why did different actors adopt the position and take actions as they had been?

The Rational Explanation

The rational explanation assumes that basic concern of all actors are the decision per se. They all tried to strive for some objectives in education in the school level. Conflicts arise because they have different goals or means to arrive at the goals, or when there are basic interest conflicts that are not easily compromised. This is goal-maximization paradigm discussion in Chapter II.

Why Should the School Consider the Language Issue

All actors in the decision making considered that the medium of instruction was an important issue in the school effectiveness. Most of them believed that there was a positive relation between the adoption of "mother-tongue" as medium of instruction and academic performance of students, and the present situation of using English in all subject was a problem. Even the department head of English Language agreed that using Chinese in subjects like EPA and BK would enhance teaching effectiveness. The dispute was over the considerations of the following factors:-

1. the supply of Chinese textbooks and teaching references,
2. the competence of teachers in using Chinese as medium of instruction,
3. the parents' attitude,
4. the continuity of junior and senior secondary school curriculum,
5. the additional human resources required to prepare new teaching syllabuses in Chinese.

At this junctures, the school management committee, viewed from a rational perspective, decided that the choice should be made by the principal and the teachers who were professionals who understood what would be best for educational effectiveness. The committee saw school effectiveness as a conglomerated whole and did not prioritize the elements that made up school effectiveness such as teaching effectiveness, administrative efficiency, quality of student in-take, and public image of the school etc. The committee's respect for professional view allowed the wide

staff participation in the policy making.

The principal, the Executive Committee and Academic Committee, as important actors of policy making invited the participation of all teachers in process of search, with the belief that the best alternative solutions could be found as a result of common strive.

The subject heads and the subject teachers shared the common goal of improving the quality of education and school effectiveness. However, they had different priorities concerning respective component of school effectiveness. Some regarded the psycho-social development of students as utmostly important in secondary school education while others considered that career prospect and entrance to tertiary education as most important. Conflict over the language issue was thus, in the rational perspective, a conflict over goals and objectives of different actors.

Different Ways of Approaching the Issue

Viewed from a rational perspective, actors of policy making tried to formulate their policies on "rational analysis". These rational basis, as seen in the above description and in terms of McGrew and Wilson's model (1982:3), varies from impartial expert advice of the third party to a participation of all interested parties. Cheng (1987) depicted these approaches as "technocratic" approach and "political approach" in his studies of educational policy making in Hong Kong in the 1980s.

In the case of School S, the school management committee chose to adopt a consultative approach, with the rationale that

the education professionals possessed the impartiality and expertise required to produce the best solution. At the same time, other methods as suggested by different groups of the teachers would also pertain to a more feasible alternative. These devices includes an overall review as suggested by the Mathematics and Science teachers, survey of parents' opinion by the English teachers, compilation of an objective report on the effectiveness of using either English or Chinese as medium of instruction, and collection of information of other schools etc. In this way, the conflict over the language issue could also be viewed as a conflict over method to reach a feasible solution, i.e. a conflict over the procedure in decision making. In this way, the principal, as a confluence point of decision making, tried to compromise the conflicts over the procedure and ruled that all devices had some merits in itself. However, when the element of time concerned, some devices were preferred to the others.

The principal's role in the process was what to what Carley (1980:11) described as survey and clarification of alternative solutions in his 5 steps of substantive rationality.

Positions of Respective Actors

Viewed from a rational perspective, the actors of decision making were goal-conscious and tried to reach an optional solution that could best accommodate the objectives. The school management committee of School S delegated the authority of decision making of the language issue to the teaching professionals in the belief that expertise would produce the most

appropriate alternatives. The supervisor emphasized that "we (the school management committee) are responsible to the sponsoring body and the society at large. We educate students as unique individuals and to prepare them to suit the changing society. We are assisted by a groups of capable academics" (SMC1).

With the authority vested on him, the principal preferred to consider the language issue on subject basis. He considered the initiatives and conviction of the teachers on the issue as a key to success of the policy. He therefore rated them highly in his consideration of the alternative solutions and decided to leave the decision to the subjects. The principal objected to conduct general review and survey of parents' opinion because time was lacking. Delay of the decision might hamper future planning of the school. The Executive Committee and Academic Committee adopted the same position as the principal. The members welcomed "rational analysis" so far as time permitted. In view that the change of the language policy would affect relevant subject teachers, the committee wanted to secure the co-operation of teachers concerned. They therefore agreed that plenary sessions should be held.

Different subject heads had their own priorities of educational objectives. Some concerned more about the psychosocial development of students and proposed that the use of "mother tongue" was a necessity. Other concerned about the career prospect of students and defended the status quo. Like that of the subject heads, positions of teachers varied according to their understanding of educational ideals.

In short, the rational explanation sees the different actors

in the issue as "goal conscious". Their primary concern was to arrive at some desired policy concerning the language issue.

The Legitimacy Explanation

The legitimacy explanation assumes that the interactions between the actors in policy making may not be prompted by a desired policy output, but that the acquisition or defense of legitimacy could itself be the "goal". In this case, the concern of the actor is often in the process rather than the policies per se. Conflicts were therefore not ones of approaches nor of interests, but one of legitimacy.

Why Should the School Consider the Language Issue

Members of the Executive Committee was not especially interested in the language issue until in 1983 when some "progressive" teachers began to discuss the adoption of "mother tongue" as medium of instruction. The Executive Committee was determined to take over and matter in the belief that issue that affected the school's development on a long term basis should be presented to the Executive Committee for discussion and endorsement. The Executive Committee was keen to maintain its role as the chief advisory body to the principal. In certain cases, like the issue of allocation of periods to individual subjects, the Executive Committee even insisted that the decision be made in the committee with the principal as the chairman (TS3). The Executive Committee had its legitimacy to defend and hence had to acknowledge the language issue as a 'real problem' for it to tackle.

The Academic Committee followed the same line with the Executive Committee. The head of the Academic Committee who was also head of the Chinese department wished to take this opportunity to re-establish the status of the Academic Committee. The logistic of the Academic committee was to hold a plenary session to discuss the issue and presented a list of alternatives for the principal and Executive Committee's consideration. Viewed from a legitimacy perspective, the Academic Committee had also its legitimacy to defend. The majority of the Academic Committee members regarded that the outcome of the language policy would not affect the relative status of the committee whereas the fact that the Academic Committee was empowered to hold plenary discussion sessions and draft the final proposal would substantively raise the status of the committee. Thus the language issue should be included in the agenda and be regarded as a real problem to be tackled.

The principal expressed that he was not especially convinced of the need to adopt "mother tongue" as teaching medium. Talking from his own personal experience and the fact that the student intake of the school was improving substantively, the principal could have set aside the issue even with the additional resource provided by the Education Department. He added that change of medium of instruction could affect the confidence of parents. However, as the chief administrator of the school, he believed that he had the responsibility to respond to and accommodate issues that his staff considered important. "If you don't respond, it is either because you are incompetent or you are not responsible." the principal remarked (TS1). He believed that a

good principal should be open, democratic and had good initiative. As seen from a legitimacy perspective, the principal had to defend his legitimacy as a good, democratic and efficient administrator. He had to take initiative to accommodate the language policy as an issue of the school. Otherwise the initiative would be usurped by his subordinates. In the same way, subject heads had their legitimacy to defend who regarded themselves as chief advisors to the principal on their respective subjects.

Justifying Decisions

The approaches adopted by different actors to justify their decisions varies from an impartial third party consultation to heated debates of plenary discussions of all parties with involving interests. In between were consultation sessions, establishment of a "search" committee, compilation of relevant research materials and opinion survey of relevant parties.

The legitimacy explanation assumes that actors concerned have their legitimacy to defend. In doing so, they may choose a particular solution to the problem not because it is the best one in term of the consequential effect but because it serves to legitimize their roles as actors. And furthermore, in order to make their choices more convincing, the actors had to rely on some ways of justifying them. Then they try to legitimate their choices.

The school management committee had for a long time viewed its non-professional nature as a deficit of legitimacy in making major policy for the school. In the June meeting, a member

mentioned about inviting a group of local educators outside the school to investigate into the matter. This is close to third party consultation which would offer an impartial solution to the issue. The member, himself a prominent dentist, remarked that no matter what the outcome would be, it could be acceptable to all parties (SMC2). The committee finally chose to instruct the principal and teachers to execute its own search. The committee also demanded a reporting back of the process and the final outcome. The devices employed by the school management committee were delegation and reporting back. It was clear that it would add to the deficit of legitimacy of the committee in terms of expertise if the committee chose to take either position i.e. agree or disagree with the change of medium of instruction. The committee, in making the choice as mentioned above, gave up its authority of decision making for an exchange of legitimacy.

The demand for reporting back, on the other hand, defended the legitimacy of the school management committee as the school's highest policy making body.

The role of the supervisor resembled that of the management committee in many ways. In the discussion with the principal in the early stage of the issue, the supervisor considered inviting a group of outside educators as a resource team to serve the management committee. Function of the resource team was close to the "search" committee suggested by the teachers. This was an effort of gaining legitimacy through expertise. After learning that the two subjects, namely EPA and BK, had already set a precedence in the policy, the supervisor chose to leave the power of decision making to the principal and teachers. In this way,

he could maintain his good relationship with the principal and the teachers, a legitimacy he intended to maintain.

Unlike the management committee, the principal adopted a "political approach". As a front-line administrator, the principal believed that the best decision was the one acceptable to those most affected by it. That was why the principal insisted that decisions would be made on the basis of individual subjects from the very beginning of the issue. On the other hand, he accepted the idea of plenary session with the belief that it could open up an avenue for exchange of views. He believed that there would not be overwhelming opinions expressed for either side. Plenary sessions with all affected parties attending was 'political' in nature. The situation was difficult to handle. However, the principal was convinced that it would add to the strength of the legitimacy of the policy. As a consequence, the principal defended his legitimacy as a democratic and responsible administrator.

Members of the Executive Committee have different methods to legitimate their choice. Those who were favorable to use Chinese urged to form a "search" committee which would possibly provide them with an impartial and academic support. In the perspective of legitimacy explanation, it was to legitimate a policy with expertise. On the other hand, those who did not welcome a change of policy utilized the parents' opinion survey as a evidence for their choice. To maintain unity, the two proposed activities were later given up by the proponents to give way to plenary discussion session. Divided in opinion as it was, the Executive Committee had an intention to maintain its legitimacy as a

unified, impartial body.

The Academic Committee was active in the issue by collecting and disseminating information to all teachers concerned on the language issue. The members of the committee, though divided in the choice in the issue, has a common understanding that no matter the final resolution would be, the relative importance of the committee would be raised. The committee's main concern was its active participation in the process of policy making.

The subject heads, on the other hand, had to defend their roles as head of their departments and as chief professional advisors to the principal. Both positions urged them to be active and to take initiative in the issue. Some of the subject heads believed that, the Academic Committee's active role in the process threatened their position as actors of decision, not so much in the decision of the present issue, but in the future issues. The primary concern of the heads, in the legitimacy explanation, was to legitimate their choice through various devices. Decisions, in most cases, were made before the "search" and discussion sessions.

The Positions of Respective Actors

The legitimacy explanation attempts to see the actions taken by individual actors as a defense of their respective legitimacy. Legitimacy is referred here to the "credibility" and "acceptability" of the actors or the policy rather than the legality of them. This has been duly discussed in section "Legitimacy in Decision-making" (pp. 17-18). The last two sub-topics have explained the reasons for certain actors adopting

their particular positions. To avoid repetition, the writer would concentrate on discussion of the positions of the head of Chinese department.

The head of the Chinese department at the earlier stage of the issue did not object to using Chinese as medium of instruction in most subjects. She believed that teaching efficiency would be substantively raised as a result of the policy. She was also convinced that the success of the policy depended on the conviction of individual teachers. However, in the debates that followed, she objected to the idea that consideration of the language should be made on the basis of individual subjects. She insisted on a unified guiding principle. Her seemingly inconsistent positions puzzled the writer until in a follow-up interview, she explained that it was a way through which the Academic Committee could regain its authority over the subject panels (TS4). In the same conversation, she mentioned about the episode of allocation of periods to subject in 1986. She was alarmed by the lowering of authority of the Academic Committee. She expressed that authority of individual subject heads had to be limited (TS4). That explained her position in the later stage of the issue. In the legitimacy explanation, she had a legitimacy to defend, as head of the Academic Committee.

The teachers' positions in the issue were revealed in the plenary discussion sessions. Their opinions were divided. One EPA teacher spoke very strongly in favour of using Chinese and defended very sternly his position. He told the writer that he was not sure whether his option was a better one for students

when all consequences including students' career prospect were taken in consideration. He remarked "Anyway, as a participant in the discussion session, you have to be bold enough to take a stand and to defend it subsequently.": (TS9) In the legitimacy perspective, the teacher had a legitimacy of an active actor to be maintained. His concern was to participate in the process.

In sum, the legitimacy explanation sees the language issue as largely a battle in which actors fought to increase or compensate for legitimacy for their authorities in policy-making. The language issue in School S was initiated by some "progressive" teachers and subject heads. The Commission's Report and the Education Department's provision of additional resources added weight to the issue. The acceptance of the language issue as an item in the agenda of policy making was a credit to the school management committee. It demonstrated their open-mindedness. To save itself from the deficit of in term of professionalism, the committee offered a "blank" approval to both answers. The principal, caught in a dilemma of defending his image as an open and democratic principal and his positional authority of a chief administrator, tried to resolve it by choosing to consider the language issue on the basis of individual subjects. In doing so, he had overruled the authority of Executive Committee and the Academic Committee which were the important part of the decision making mechanism he established. As a result, members of these committee fought back to defend their legitimacy.

Chapter VII Conclusions and Implications

As pointed out in Chapter II, this study seeks to discover rather than confirm theory, to generate rather than to test hypotheses. The last chapter explores whether theories have been discovered or hypotheses generated.

The preceding sections have attempted to explain the language issue by using two different models. The first part of this section attempts to replicate briefly these two models to interpret another incident of the school i.e. the incident of period allocation of individual subjects. This attempt is to ensure that the use of legitimacy model in parallel to the rational model is not unique to the language issue chosen for the study, nor only to School S as a chosen school for study. The overall objective is to demonstrate that the notion of legitimacy, as depicted in previous chapters, is worth pursuing as an alternative to other conventional models.

The rest of the section is devoted to further developing the notion of legitimacy. This part includes a discussion of the specific implication of the notion of legitimacy to Hong Kong schools.

Further Application of the Legitimacy Explanation

As explained in chapter III, theories "discovered" in ethnographic types of research are not to be generalized by statistical inference. The success of ethnographic case studies does not lie in applying the theories generated to the "full population". Full population generalization is impossible and unjustified. However, the theories generated can be enriched by

their applicability to other cases of similar nature. It is therefore useful to see the extent to which the two explanations used in this study can be applied to another policy event in the school under study. It was the case of allocation of teaching periods. With basic facts already described in chapter IV, the writer attempts to explain the incident with the rational model and legitimacy model.

The Rational Model

Any organization had its own hierarchy of authority. The efficiency of the organization would be raised if the chain of command is well depicted. As suggested by the formal structure, the principal with his executive committee formed the apex of the policy making pyramid. They possessed more thorough information on all parts of the school and hence could make the most rational choice. The queries of the member of Executive Committee on the validity of the decision made in the plenary session was rational. The ground was that the Executive Committee who had fuller information and judgment. They might add better alternative solutions to the issue. Thus the primary concern of all parties were of the outcome of decision making.

Legitimacy Explanation

Legitimacy explanation sees that the actors had their legitimacy to be defended or strengthened. The Academic Committee supported the decision made at the plenary session to acquire its legitimacy as a significant device in the policy

making mechanism in the school. For the same reason, the Executive Committee objected to the decision to defend its legitimacy as a highest advisory committee to the principal. Their concern was not the policy per se but the process and the way their role of actors of policy-making being affected.

The Applicability of Legitimacy as Explanation Model

When we apply the legitimacy explanation to the language issue of School S, especially on the relation between the principal and its main advisory committees, namely, the Executive Committee and the Academic Committee, we can say that, the committee provided the principal with the legitimacy he required to justify his policy. These committees were, in some occasions, impartial experts, and sometimes, representatives of involving parties. In some special cases such as the language issue, the principal simply discarded his committees and safeguard his legitimacy as an open minded policy-maker by a participatory approach. The study thus strongly suggests that legitimacy is not only the concern of the state or the government, but a general matter of concern of all actors in policy-making at all levels.

The study also suggests a new perspective of conflicts in decision making i.e. conflicts of legitimacy. The conventional theories of a conflict often base their arguments on either value differences, competing economic interests or contrasting political ideologies. All these conflicts are visualized in conflicting alternatives, or policy outputs. The results of this study tend to suggest another type of conflict of legitimacy. One actor's legitimacy could undermine another's. The legitimacy

conflict differs from the other conflict in that the conflict lies on the process and not the product of policy-making. In the case of the allocation of teaching periods, the rising legitimacy of the special committee could undermine the legitimacy of the Executive Committee. In the case of language issue, there were conflicts of legitimacy between the subject heads and the Executive Committee.

The study also hinted that the various devices such as "search committee" opinion survey of parents etc suggested in the course of the policy making served not only the purpose of deriving a more feasible alternative solution, but to fulfill the legitimacy of different actors. There is a "second-level objective" to be fulfilled. Through a "participatory" approach, the principal might act independently of his advisory committees. On the other hand, the "search" committee could add much strength to the Mathematics department heads in term of impartiality and objectivity of his proposal. Legitimacy is thus a "second-level objective" to be tackled.

As concerning "theory generating" as discussed in Chapter II, the present study can serve as an illustration of the "Organized Anarchy" which is regarded as a model closely connected with the notion of legitimacy. The Organized Anarchy model assume that decisions are the product of the outcome of the confluence of four relatively independent streams at a given time: choice opportunities, problem, solutions and participants. (p.37)

The present study illustrated that

1. in the school context, the principal was the point of con-

fluence of the four independent factors that made up a decision. He controlled the information flow and decided that how an agenda was formulated.

2. a group of "progressive" teachers found that language issue a way to express their wish for democratization of educational system. The request for democratization in fact existed before the language issue. It was until the emergence of the language issue that such request found a legitimate expression. It confirmed that problems and solution existed simultaneously looking for pairing and coupling.
3. In the present study, participants in the policy making e.g. the teachers, left the arena of policy making as dictated by time and demand rather than by the organizational structure.

Legitimacy and Policy-making in School Level in Hong Kong

The study of legitimacy perspective in educational policy making started in the United States in 1970s. Many researchers found the notion a feasible alternative to the well-versed rationality model. It added to the understanding of the educational policy making. In the 1987, Cheng (1987) in his study of the two episodes on educational policy making in Hong Kong, namely, the Commission on the Review of Senior Secondary Education (CRE) and OECD panel, concluded that

The concept of legitimacy in explaining policy-making processes proves to be a worthwhile hypothesis and lends itself to further research and theory building.

Cheng's study confirmed that in educational policy making process, actors reacted with the intention of acquiring or defending their legitimacy. The present study while focused on a school level, can identify that actors in a school level also had their legitimacy to be acquired and defended. The concern of the actors in policy making was not only the outcome but also the process. The notion of legitimacy thus provides a new perspective of understanding of education policy making in different levels.

The present study is an overall study of interaction of various actors of decision making in the process. It does confirm their respective roles in the process. However it does not differentiate the relative significance of individual actors and explain the reason. Future study may concentrate on individual actors such as the supervisor or the principal which may shade more light on decision making in school context.

The application of the legitimacy explanation in educational policy making is new to the local situation, so as the ethnographic approach as adopted in the study. The study is a bold and immature attempt to understand Hong Kong education issues in a new perspective. It suggests that the Language Issue in schools may not be resolved in a "rational" way as many believed and that a "new" concept legitimacy and "new" methodology, namely, the ethnographic approach may open up a new avenue of research on Hong Kong educational issues.

Appendix I

Guidelines on Interviewing Key Informants

1. General Description

- a. Please describe the decision making process of the language issue in a chronological order.
- b. Please describe the meetings/discussion which you think most important in reference to the decision making.
- c. What do you think is the major considerations in the issue?
- d. Please describe the choice-making process in reference to the decision of language issue.

2. Decision-makers

- a. Who have been involved in the decision making? Why?
- b. In reference to (a) whom do you think should not have been included in the process? What is the reason?
- c. Whom do you think possesses greater influence on the choice making? What do you think is the reason?
- d. Who else do you think should be involved in the process?
In your opinion, why were they not involved?

3. Reflection

- a. Do you think that the decision was well made in term of procedure? Why do you think so?
- b. Do you think the decision was well made in term of fulfillment of its objectives? Why do you think so?

4. Comparison

- a. Please describe the normal practice of decision making of issues similar to the language issue.

b. In what ways do the decision making conform to or differ from the usual practice?

Appendix II

Administrative Structure

School Management Committee (Supervisor)

Executive Committee (Principal)

Academic Committee	Disciplinary Committee	Student Welfare & Counselling Committee	Extra- Curricular Activities Committee	Religious Education Committee	Careers Committee	Resources Committee
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